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Of that Intelligence which governs all,
I sing."

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I.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE.

EVERY-DAY RELIGION.

I.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE.

SOME persons make a great deal of life; others very little. To some it is intensely interesting; to others, very vapid. Some are tired of life before they have begun to live. They seem, as has been said, to have been born fatigued. Nothing interests them. This is a species of affectation with some persons to whom it seems a mark of genius to be weary of life. They think it argues an enormous experience and that they have exhausted everything. Wherever it is an affectation it is a very shallow one. Noble and manly natures seldom fall into this pit of satiety. They are full of hope and energy. To them life has inexhaustible charms. It is ever more rich, full, and varied. Each day dawns with new expectations, and closes with fresh hopes for to-morrow. And it is these living men

who keep the rest of us alive. Whenever we meet them more sunshine comes into the day. Let us only share their enthusiasm, and we too cannot help making a great deal of life.

How full and rich was the character of the Apostle Paul! How much he made out of his years! He stands, like the Nilometer in Egypt, to tell how high the river of Thought, Love, and Will may rise. He changed Christianity, before only a Jewish sect, into a universal religion, a faith for mankind. Though he had never seen Jesus on earth, and never heard his teaching, he understood the Master better than those who had been with him. Paul could not write a gospel, but he comprehended the Gospels more truly than those who wrote them. He labored more abundantly than they all. He passed through more trials than any of the other apostles. He planted more churches, took more journeys, wrote more letters; his life was outwardly full of work. But besides this, it was a life of thought, of deep reflection. His discussions about spiritual and moral truths, as recorded in the Epistle to the Romans, take us down to the roots of things. He grappled with the primary problems of thought. He soared upward, like a flame, to the highest heaven of devotion, to the presence of God, where angels and archangels veil their faces. But this did not content him; perpetual progress was his life. "One thing I do: forgetting what is behind, and reaching out to that which is before, I press

toward the mark." If we ask how it was that Paul made so much of his life, — omitting the questionable point of his inspiration, — I think we may say it was the enthusiasm of his love, which took him out of himself in devotion to his great Master.

This, then, is the first rule for making the most of life: *Forget yourself in some interest outside of yourself.* He who is turned inward, thinking of himself, admiring himself, complaining that he is ill-treated; he who thinks he ought to have more of the rewards of life, — he is the one who does not begin to live. Life is born out of communion, — communion with God, Nature, man. "We only live," says the profound thinker, the philosopher Fichte, — "we only live when we love!" How true that is! We must be interested in something in order to be alive, and no one can take a great deal of interest in himself. Looking in the glass is an unprofitable occupation. Socrates, indeed, taught, "Know thyself;" but the self-knowledge which he advised did not consist in minute self-inspection, but in testing thought and work by that which other men think and do. Socrates did not occupy himself with self-study, but went about the streets of Athens taking an interest in all that was thought, said, and done. He was interested in others, — in the condition of the State, the progress of truth, the diet of the soul, the stimulus of goodness, the restraints on evil. How men could be made better and wiser, — that was what engaged

his whole thought, and this made his life one which has been the inspiration of mankind.

But, you may say, we cannot all be inspired apostles or great philosophers. No; but the motive, the principle which made their lives rich, we can have in ours. This principle is, to be interested in something good; to have an object, an aim, a purpose outside of ourselves.

In the great storms which have lately swept over the north Atlantic, a steamer from our shores discovered another, dismasted and rudderless, drifting before the gale, its decks swept by terrible seas. The sailors volunteered to man a boat, and go to save those on the wreck. The labor was appalling, the dangers frightful; but they succeeded, and saved the lives of their fellow-men. Which has made the noblest use of life, the self-indulgent epicurean, who amuses himself with a little art, a little literature, a little criticism and a little vapid social pleasure, or these rugged, brave hearts, who bade defiance to storm and sea, and brought salvation to those in despair? To forget yourself is the secret of life; to forget yourself in some worthy purpose outside of yourself.

The poor steamer foundered because it drifted; because its steering apparatus was lost. The man who has no aim higher than himself also drifts; he has nothing by which to steer, nothing toward which to direct his life. *Do not drift, but steer;* that is the second rule.

Consider the life of a man like Agassiz, filled with an enthusiastic desire to know all the secrets of Nature. He, also, like Paul, never counted himself to have apprehended. He forgot what was behind, and reached out to that which was before. His life was full and rich, and he made the most of it. He worshipped God in the temple of creation. How happy he was in this immense love for Nature! Nothing in her works was too minute to interest him, for everything was significant. At one end of the scale of human existence stands the blasé man of the world, to whom nothing seems of much importance. At the other end is a man like Agassiz, to whom nothing is *un*important. To him, everything which has been made has a meaning; thus he lives in a world in which he sees nothing insignificant.

These men, however, it may be said, were enthusiasts; they had enthusiasm for some pursuit, to which they devoted themselves. But most of us are of a more plain, common-sense, practical nature. They are no models for us. They are inimitable.

Then let us look at a man of another type, who certainly was not an enthusiast, yet who made more of his life, did more, learned more, than any man of his generation. I mean Benjamin Franklin. He was clear-headed and sagacious; but that is not the key to his remarkable career. I think the secret of his vast success was that he did everything as well as it could be done. He put his mind into

his work. His motto might have been, "Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might." He prized the present moment, and gave his whole thought to it. Most of us do a great many things mechanically, satisfied if we do as well as others, no worse than the majority, so as not to risk much loss or incur much blame. The power of Franklin lay in this; that whatever his hand found to do, he did it with his might. He did not wait till to-morrow to do something, but did what his hand found to-day. It is surprising how little he had of what is called ambition. It seemed to make very little difference to him what he did, or where he was. He drifted to Philadelphia, but when there he did not drift, but steered. He took the first decent work which he could find, and did it with his might. The Governor of the Province proposed to him to go to London, promising to help him to buy a printing-press, that he might do the public printing. After Franklin had gone the Governor forgot his promise. But it made little difference to Franklin. Being in London, he went to work as a printer, and there he remained till some occasion sent him back again to this country. Prudent, economical, industrious, watchful, he could not help growing rich. But he does not seem to have cared much about that. What he wished was to find all the secrets of the work he was doing, finish it in the best way, and to teach others how to do things well. In his shop in

Philadelphia, in a printing-office in London, ambassador at the court of Louis XVI., conversing with British statesmen and philosophers, he was the same,—a wide-awake person, with his mind keenly fixed on the thing nearest him. He did not worry about possible future evils, nor torment himself about an irrevocable past. He put his whole soul into the present moment, the work just at hand. He gave as earnest thought to the methods of his society of young men in Philadelphia for study and discussion, as to a treaty with France or the formation of the American Constitution. Each thing as it came, took his whole mind, heart, and strength. That was why he did so much. He lived, as has been said, in the whole. Most of us are very apt to live in the half. We put part of our mind into our present work; with the rest of our mind we are worrying about the past or the future, or imagining what other better things we might be doing. So we work in a half-and-half way. *Do with your might what your hand finds to do;* that is our third rule.

A habit of mind which interferes with this concentration of faculty on the present is that of laying too much stress on public opinion, and of troubling ourselves in regard to what others will think about us. One of the good things that Garfield said was this: "I do not much care what others think or say about me, but there is one man's opinion about me which I very much value; that is the opinion of

James Garfield. Others I need not think about. I can get away from them; but I have to be with *him* all the time. He is with me when I rise up and when I lie down, when I eat and talk, when I go out and when I come in. It makes a great difference whether he thinks well of me or not."

Garfield also had the power of doing with his might whatever his hand found to do. He began life a poor boy, wholly dependent on his own efforts. He went to Hiram College when quite young, hardly able to support himself there, but full of courage, hope, determination to learn all he could, and to use all his opportunities. He had the good fortune to meet in that place with one of those women who help young men to choose the right way in life; to look up instead of down; to have faith in Providence and in themselves; to aim at what is great and noble, not to condescend to the current of trivial opinion, or be drawn away by it. Having the happiness to know such a woman (her name was Almeda Booth), he had the good sense to appreciate her worth, and to be led by her advice and example. This saved him from bad influence, from commonplace dissipation, from wasting his time, and kept permanently before his soul the ideal of making of himself all he could. His three ruling thoughts were patience, labor, faith. When he began to teach school, he made in his mind an imaginary map of the school, with each boy in his place. Then he thought about each boy separately, and asked,

"What can I do for Johnny Smith? What sort of a boy is he? What does he need most?" He taught school with his might. He said, "Unless one believes in something far higher than himself he will fail." On the one hand he determined not to be an office-seeker or a place-hunter, and to believe that if he ought to have anything, God would send it. But this did not lead him to trust to chance, for he also said, "Things do not turn up in this world. Some one must turn them up." "Observe all things," he said; "question all men." He had the good sense to know when he found a master from whom he could learn anything good. Such a master he found in President Hopkins. "Give me a log-hut," he said, "with one bench in it. Let Mark Hopkins be at one end and I at the other, and I would rather have that for my college than all your buildings, libraries, and professors without him." When he went to Congress, when he was in the war, when he taught school, it was always the same. He put his whole soul into whatever he did. Whatever his hand found to do, he did with all his might.

The secret of Garfield was very much the same as that of Abraham Lincoln. I once had a long day's talk about Abraham Lincoln with a friend in Kentucky, who had lived in intimate relation with Lincoln when the latter was a young lawyer in Springfield, just beginning business. He said that Lincoln gave to every case he took his whole interest

and attention. Once he had to argue a case in which all depended on finding the right boundary for a piece of land on the prairie. There are no stones there for boundaries, and few trees, so the surveyors were in the habit of indicating the corners of the lots by shovelling up a little heap of earth. But it happens that a prairie squirrel, or gopher, does the same thing. Hence it becomes important to distinguish between the mounds made by the surveyor and those made by the gopher. Lincoln sent to New York for books which would tell him of the habits of the gopher, brought them into court, showed the judge and jury how the gopher built his mound, how it differed from that of the surveyor, and after he had won his case, sat up late in the night still studying about the gopher, so as to be sure to know all about him. He, also, did with his might what he had to do.

Such men are not

> "Longing, not forever sighing
> For the far-off, the unattained, the dim."

They take what their hand finds, as sent to them by God, — the duty of the hour, the simple pleasures, innocent and pure, of common things which round us lie. Mr. Emerson said in his first book: "Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos and fairy-realm; broad noon my England of the senses and under-

standing; the night shall be my Germany of poetic philosophy and dreams."

Ralph Waldo Emerson is another striking instance in our times of a man who made the most of life. He proved the truth of his own saying, "Let the single man plant himself on his instincts, and the huge world will come round to him." He had two leading ideas, by which he lived, and which he taught to his age. One of them was "Self-reliance," the other "God-reliance." Trust in your own deep and permanent convictions, though the whole world insist that you are wrong. "Call a pop-gun a pop-gun, though the ancient and honorable declare it to be the crack of doom." He believed in that which was highest, and did that which was nearest, following the suggestive lines of Wordsworth: —

> "The primal duties shine aloft like stars;
> The charities which soothe and bless and save,
> Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers."

Pursuing his own way quietly, trusting in the intuitions of his soul, saying his own words, not those of any one else, accepting the present moment with its immediate inspiration, and believing in an overhanging heaven and an infinite spiritual presence, Emerson did with his might what his hand found to do, and saw the great world come round to him. *Trust in God and your own soul,* is the fourth rule.

I have described conspicuous persons, because in such lives principles of action are made most evident. But it must not be supposed that they have any monopoly of this "Art of life." If you will only consider, you will remember many a person of whom the world never heard and will never hear, whose years have been as full of generosity, loyalty to duty, faith in God, fidelity to every day's work, as those of Franklin or Garfield, Lincoln or Emerson. They, also, have put their hands to the plough and have not looked back. Having made up their minds to what ought to be done, they did not hesitate, did not procrastinate, did not worry or grow anxious, but faithfully performed the duty of the hour. They had faith in Providence, and so did with their might what their hands found to do. They gave, and it was given to them again, "full measure, pressed down and running over." They did good, hoping for nothing again, and the reward came in lives full of content; in cheerfulness, peace, and satisfaction.

II.

THE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

II.

THE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

THE doctrine of Correspondences, as taught by Swedenborg, contains much truth. This, at least, is true, that there is not only a resemblance between material and spiritual things, but that the one is the natural sign of the other. The facts of outward nature signify other facts of the soul. Thus, in all languages, light stands for knowledge. We speak of brilliant ideas, an illuminated intellect, the shining forth of truth. So heat, in all time, has signified affection, or feeling. We say warm affections, hot desires, burning love, fiery passions, and the like. In the same way physical forces in the outward world correspond to will, purpose, determination of spirit. We say an iron will, a strong purpose, a powerful determination. The three dimensions of space — height, depth, and width — are types of aspiration, of reflection, and of experience. We say deep thoughts, lofty purposes, a broad experience. This is what is meant by types. The physical world is full of types of the mental world. We use these symbolic expressions many

times a day, and we never confound them together. We do not say hot ideas, but hot passions; we do not compare a man's thoughts to a rock, but his firmness of purpose we say is like a rock. Thus the visible heaven and earth around us are types of the invisible world within us. I do not see the value of all of Swedenborg's correspondences. When he says that a cloud means divine truth in the ultimates, or that a horse means meditation on the word, I am not able to understand him. But I can easily believe that the whole outward universe is the expression of God's thoughts, and can say with Milton,—

> "What if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
> Each to the other like, more than below is thought?"

One of these analogues is the human body as a type of that social body which we call the State. The human body is composed of little cells; and so society is composed of families. The family is to the State what the cell is to the body. And then as each type may suggest again another and higher resemblance, the human family becomes the type of the religious communion of souls.

"The whole family in heaven and earth." When the Apostle Paul said that, he had a wonderful vision of the future. That all this earth should be one, human nature one, mankind one family,—that was a new idea, and a vast one.

Christianity came to make mankind one. At the very first we notice this approaching unity. "The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said they that anything they possessed was their own, but they had all things common." There were men of many races, "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Pontus and Phrygia, Greeks, and Romans." But the power of divine and human love had made of them a family. The partition walls of race, nation, color, fell down, and they became in spirit one.

But Paul's wonderful vision did not stop there. It was not only a family on earth, created by Christ, but also a family in heaven; one and the same; a vast family of the redeemed above and below.

But to have one family we must have many families. As the life of the tree consists of life in innumerable buds, as the life of the body is made up of innumerable living cells, so the family on earth is made up of innumerable families. The family in heaven, according to this law, must also be made up of innumerable families. Earthly life is the type of heavenly life. If we would know what the life is there, we must look at the best life here. A true, ideal family on earth is the type of heaven. Let us, then, ask what is the highest form of family life below. What is an ideal family?

The ideal family is one in which there is the father and mother, the brothers and sisters, the aged

grandfather and grandmother, the infant in its cradle, the kind aunts and uncles and cousins. So the family is formed, having a life of its own, — many members, but one body.

This family is full of love. All the members are mutually attached and dependent. Each cares for the other. They have their separate interests and work, but they bring together the results of what they think and do. They go out for their various occupations, but come back to repose and rest in a mutual interest and a mutual trust.

The family also is an ideal one when it is pervaded by ideas. If we enter a home where there are aspirations, hopes, generous thoughts, interest in great themes, care for others, then family life begins to be glorified, and to take on the character of a Christian church.

How happy is the child who grows up in a complete family; who is surrounded by loving care from the beginning; who has not only the father and mother always near, but sees around brothers and sisters and cousins; uncles and aunts; relatives, neighbors, friends! He has already in his soul a type of the true church and the coming heaven.

But more is needed to make a true family. A home is needed. The family in heaven and earth needs a home.

What is a home? It is a place made sacred by happy associations; it is comfort, safety, a retreat from outside trouble; it is the region where peace

should always abide. Such a home every family needs.

Three things go to make a home. These three are, first, the roof; second, the table; third, the parlor.

There is the *roof*—that is, the home as shelter. The first thing which we see around us as children is this shelter. The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but man has more; his home is shelter, security, peace, comfort. To a child the house he lives in, from garret to cellar, is interesting. The garret is the child's museum of curiosities, and the cellar is his unexplored region of wonders. At least it used to be so, though I am afraid that modern architectural improvements have banished the genuine old-fashioned garret and cellar by letting order into the one and light into the other. But in my childhood the garret was a great storehouse of curiosities, dusty bundles of newspapers from the last century, the antiquated smokejack which used to turn our meat, helmets and crimson sashes from the Revolution, side-saddles and high-heeled shoes belonging to belles of past times. And the old-fashioned cellar, as I remember it, had its dark recesses and hidden chambers, into the inmost of which the boldest of us dared not venture. Homes in those days seemed solid, and meant to last. They were not bought and sold at every caprice, but were the abiding-place of many generations.

The roof is the shelter of the family. When the

winter storm rages without; when the sleet beats against the window, and the snow lies heavy around; within blazes the cheerful fire, and the family gathers around it in security and peace.

The soul also needs a roof, a shelter; and the Church, in its largest sense, is the shelter of the soul. Jesus gave this large definition of the Church when he said, "If two or three meet together in my name, I am in the midst of them." A thousand people meeting in the name of fashion, of established usage, of vanity, do not make a church. A creed and liturgy do not make a church. But where two really meet in the spirit of Christ, there is a church. There the soul finds shelter, comfort, peace, a home; and Christ is present to protect and inspire, to uplift and cheer. This is divine overarching roof, the dome of the spiritual heaven.

Another element which unites the family in its home is the *table*. It is a distinction of civilized man to eat in company. Animals eat alone, when and where they can. Savages often eat alone. But the common table is the fruit of civilization. Twice or three times a day the members of the household collect and sit opposite to each other at a common meal. How much does not this add to the intimacy and union of a household! To break bread together is a sacrament of friendship among all nations. In that family which we call a church is also this meeting together for food. The Church

spreads its table on the Lord's Day, and offers food to the mind and heart in its prayers and hymns, its Scripture and its sermons. It spreads another table in its literature, its religious biographies, its journals, its sacred histories, its sacred poetry, its books of edification and instruction. It spreads a table for the young in its Sunday school. Its social meetings and conferences offer food in still another way, so that every mind and heart shall be satisfied. This table of the Church comprises all its means of edification. But here again let us distinguish between the technical church and the true church. If we go to church and hear dogmas, or literary essays, or philosophical discussions, or severe attacks on other churches, or assaults on unbelievers, what does it profit? "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed." But the church which feeds the soul is one in which we are helped to feel the presence and love of God in the world; to know the grandeur of our human life, the nobleness of living for others, and the certain triumph of truth over error, right over wrong, good over evil. That is the food we need, — food for conscience, heart, and life, to make us strong for our work, to comfort us in our sorrow, to enable us to see heaven near while we walk on earth.

The Lord's Supper is the symbol of the food which Christ and Christianity supply to the human mind and heart. We eat a piece of bread and drink a little wine as an expression of our faith that

Christ's life and death feed our souls with strength and joy. All should thus unite who have this faith. It is not for church members only, but for all Christians. It is not for the good and holy, for pious persons only, any more than prayer and public worship is for them only. Just as in a family all the members come together, old and young, to the breakfast-table, even to the little child sitting in his high chair, so to the table of the Lord all should come, even the youngest and humblest Christian who yet claims Jesus as his teacher, friend, and Saviour.

The third thing which characterizes every home is, that it is a sphere of activity and centre of communion, of which the *parlor* (or keeping-room, as it is called in the country) is the focus. From this the family go out, each to his work or pleasure; to this they all return, and communicate what they have gained. Every home is the centre of a circle, and these circles overlap each other, so that one circle catches into another, and thus society is made up of many little family circles, which are linked in and in with each other. So in the old coats of mail each ring of steel was interlinked with two or three others. Every child and man living in a home and family is thus introduced to surrounding homes and families, and brought into a communion of work, of study, of thought, of social sympathy and intercourse. And thus every church ought to be a circle interlinked with other surrounding churches, and

so tending to make a Christian society, a church universal.

The old town-life of New England was like one great family. Some of us have seen the memoir of a lady who lived in a town on the Connecticut River some fifty years ago, before railroads existed, and when a journey to Boston was a serious affair. That book shows how every one in the town knew every one else. It was a matter of course that every one should visit every one else. If one member suffered, all suffered; if one rejoiced, all were happy.

The ideal school is also like a family. When a school is governed like an army, and discipline is the chief element, there is a low type of school. As it approaches to family life it rises. This was the ideal of Pestalozzi, to make a school like a family; and all educational reform since his time has been in that direction.

The ideal church is like a family. A church which is governed like an army, where discipline is the chief element, belongs to a low type. A church which approaches family life rises higher and higher. Such was the Church at first, when we read that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any one that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." A true church ought to seem like a home, and all within it to be like brothers and sisters.

The great religious reform introduced by Jesus, and which has lifted all human society to a higher level, which saved Roman civilization from utter ruin, which tamed Northern barbarism, and united warring races into a new league of Christian States, had its root and its essence in this idea, that all mankind are one family. It consisted in the conviction that God is our Father, and therefore to be obeyed and loved; that Jesus is the Christ because he is "the Son," the best illustration of true filial love to God; and that humanity is a brotherhood. In this lies the essence of the great Christian faith and life, — the conviction that there is one family in heaven and earth.

Therefore, the first and fundamental conviction in Christianity is, that God is our Father. We are his family, and he is the Father of the household. Jesus did not invent the term as applied to God, but he introduced the spirit of filial thought when he said, "Our Father who art in heaven;" "My Father worketh hitherto." He was thought irreverent by the people around him in being so familiar with the infinite and almighty God. But it was the familiarity born of trust and love, and it has made the world new.

I lately received a tract called "Hell," published in Scotland, the object of which is to persuade us by the usual theological logic, based on a bald literalism, that God is to punish forever those of his children who do not pass through some experience

considered necessary by those who call themselves evangelical. The reply to such arguments is an answer taught by the Master. "What man is there among you, being a father," who could do this? What father, unless insane with cruelty, would torture his child forever in a hell where he could get no good? What man of only a decent feeling of responsibility would wish to create a child who could plunge himself into such irreparable ruin? Many a man is called an atheist whose utterances are less irreligious than this. If any one said of you that you had constructed a furnace into which to put your children, and had invented a way of prolonging their lives and their sufferings forever, would you not be indignant at such an outrageous accusation? But this is exactly what believers in everlasting punishment teach concerning the Almighty, whom they profess to worship. I think I hear Jesus saying of such teachers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

I am not now making an appeal to human reason. I am using the argument that our Master has used before. When he wished to convince the disciples that God would give his spirit in answer to prayer, he did not assert it on his own authority; he did not demand their assent because of his supernatural character; he did not say, "Believe me, for I am inspired, and sent by God to teach you." No; but he argued from the character of a human father to that of a divine father. He said, "What man is

there among you who, if his son asks bread, will he give him a stone? If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him." Thus he authorized us to argue from the finite goodness of an earthly father to the infinite goodness of the heavenly Father. He taught us to look through earthly love to find heavenly love.

In the teaching of Jesus this profound conviction, this fixed habit of always seeing God as a Father, is the idea which determines all other beliefs. No doctrine can be true in Christianity which regards the Deity otherwise than as a Father. Christianity develops itself out of this centre of life. If you wish to know how God will feel and act, how he will regard any act of yours, you must ask, How would a good and wise father feel or act in like circumstances?

Thus true family life is everywhere the germ out of which the higher life comes. It is the seed of the true school, the true neighborhood, the true church, and the heaven beyond. Everything which makes family life better helps the Church and the State. Let us, then, cherish and purify the family; let us improve the household and home; let us bring all good influences to bear on these centres of progress, and we shall be doing the Lord's work.

There will, no doubt, be families in heaven, groups of angels living together, homes of peace,

joy, and love. There, as here, there will be the shelter, the table, the place of communion. Those who are bound by affinities of love and thought will dwell together and work together. These families will be separate, but not divided nor solitary. They will be joined into one greater family, and the love and peace of God will make them one. There the friendship and love of earth will be purified and elevated; there we shall be known as we really are; there all misunderstandings will cease; there Jesus, the Christ, shall come near to every one of his followers, and all will be at one in him.

III.

THE RELIGION WHICH PASSES AWAY, AND THAT WHICH ABIDES.

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IN every century since Christ came there have been those who predicted the speedy downfall of his religion. It would be curious to collect a catena, or chain, of such statements. There always have been opposers of the gospel of Jesus, who believed that its power was exhausted, its life coming to an end, and that some larger, deeper, better form of religion was arriving to take its place. Gnosticism, Manicheeism, New-Platonism, Mohammedanism, poured in successive waves of thought over Christendom. But always the ark, which bore the simple story of Jesus, rose anew, and floated above the deluge; always the sun of righteousness poured out again its light and heat over the world of human life and human thought.

Christianity, as to its essence, survives all the storms of time; but Christianity, as to its forms, changes from age to age. It leaves behind many things which once seemed to be important, but

which are found to be unnecessary and unessential. The ceremonies and ritual, formerly believed vital, have come to an end; the creeds of the early centuries are outgrown. Our religion may say, as Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Many widespread beliefs of the Church were childish beliefs, and have been forgotten. It believed the world was coming to a speedy end; that Christ was coming immediately to judge the living and the dead. Figurative expressions were taken literally. Men, it was said, were saved by being baptized, and by the other sacraments. The Pope had the keys of heaven and hell. All these opinions were transient; and as one after another disappeared, many supposed that Christianity was disappearing too. So "the burning of a little straw on the earth may hide for a time the everlasting stars; but the stars are there, and will reappear."

Paul states, in a very broad way, that all religious beliefs are transient, none permanent. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. We know in part, and teach in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." He thus proclaims very distinctly what has been regarded as a discovery of modern thought, — the doctrine of "the relativity of knowledge." This, however, does not mean that all *truth* is transient, but that *our* forms of

expressing truth change. Faith holds to the eternal truth behind all statements; and thus faith abides, while belief changes.

The conviction, once universal, in the reality of witchcraft has passed away. The similar belief in possession by demons has gone by. The confidence, attested by much evidence, that the king's touch could cure disease, has disappeared. Persecution for opinion's sake, once thought a duty both by Roman Catholics and Protestants, has virtually come to an end in both religions. Other opinions are following fast after these. Many of those which were once held to be so orthodox that no man could be saved who did not believe them, are neglected and forgotten. No one is so poor as to do them reverence. They still remain imbedded in the old creeds, like fossils in some ancient stratum of rock, to show us what sort of monsters once inhabited our earth. The Athanasian Creed, which the law of England requires to be said or sung several times a year in the churches, declares that those who do not believe its mediæval statements about the Trinity "shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly." But not many years ago, in a meeting of the bishops of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury said that he supposed not one of the bishops present believed in that damnatory clause, and no one said that he did. Yet a short time ago some of my family, attending a service in a children's hospital in London, heard the little children sing

sweetly that those who did not believe the Trinity should, without doubt, perish everlastingly. So far, the Church of England has not put away childish things.

Other doctrines, worse than this, are fast passing away. The doctrine that the heathen, who make three fourths of the human race, must necessarily be punished everlastingly, is now becoming obnoxious to the orthodox believer. He still holds to the doctrine that no one can be saved except by faith in Christ. Therefore the heathen, who never have heard of Christ, must, as it would seem, perish everlastingly. "Not so," replies modern orthodoxy, "for they may have a probation in the other life." I observe that the Boston Monday lecturer met the difficulty in a more rational and liberal way. He declared that every man has in his conscience a revelation of Christ, and therefore the heathen who believe in the teachings of their conscience, and obey its laws, are really accepting and obeying Christ. And this view would seem to accord remarkably well with the account of the Day of Judgment given by Jesus himself (in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew), when he says that all the heathen shall be gathered before him, and that the test applied shall be this: "Did they, or did they not, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, be hospitable to the stranger, and visit the sick and the prisoner?" By and by, perhaps, the Christian Church may advance so far as to believe Christ's

own account of the principles of probation and judgment.

Another belief which is passing away is that of the infallible inspiration of the whole Bible. A curious instance of this is to be found in a late issue of "The Independent," a New York liberal-orthodox journal. There are in this number two articles. One of them declares it to be a sign of the downward tendency of Unitarianism that it has no adequate faith in the Bible. This article objects to Unitarians that they put the Bible on a level with other books, when they ought to regard both the Old and New Testaments as the only and infallible rule of faith and practice. The other article is upon a life of Jesus, by a German theologian, Bernard Weiss, whom it praises as the most thorough and excellent of modern critics. The writer of this article agrees with Weiss that the theory of verbal inspiration is an unnatural one; declares that the differences in the four Gospels cannot be reconciled by any theory of inspiration, and tells us that the Gospels are to be viewed as human writings, though, as they were written by the apostles or their pupils, they are essentially credible. But he adds that our Christian belief would remain the same if we did not possess the Gospels, but only the Epistles.

"Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." So declares the Apostle Paul, pushing the subsoil plough of his philosophy so deep as to turn

up all the weeds of bigotry by the roots. All statements are partial and incomplete; therefore all statements are provisional and temporary. All creeds, all beliefs, must pass away, his own included. "We know in part, and we teach in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." This is what Paul says about his own teaching. It is not infallibly, absolutely, and forever true; only true in part, and one day to be swallowed up in larger knowledge. Meantime his followers imagine that their little ways of thinking and speaking are altogether and forever certain, so that whoever does not accept them "shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly."

There is something solemn, something sad, in this decay and change of what men have believed; this passing away of beliefs and opinions in which they treasured their religious life. Sad it is to see the decline of great dynasties, the fall of mighty empires, — "Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they?" — but still more sad to stand on the summit of ecclesiastical history and see what world-wide doctrines have sunk in the fast-rolling current of years. Where is the great belief that Christ was soon to come outwardly in the visible heavens to judge the world in majesty and glory? This notion, once universal, sustained the souls of those who were persecuted for conscience' sake, and was comfort to the hearts of the noble army of martyrs. Yet it has gone, and gone forever. We now see

that Christ comes in the spirit of his religion, in the progress of mankind, in the emancipation of the slaves, in tender humanities toward the suffering. Wherever a new effort is made to soften the hard lot of the weak and the oppressed, that is the coming of Christ. He comes in the spirit of all philanthropies and humanities. When the blind are taught to see through the tips of their fingers; when the deaf are made to hear by reading from the movements of the lips; when the miseries of war are alleviated by the Sanitary Commission; when the poor are helped by co-operative associations; when Mr. Brace sends the children out of the streets of New York to happy homes in the West; when Aunty Gwynne takes little orphans to her warm heart; when our friends, Miss Botume, Miss Towne, Miss Bradley, and others go to teach the negro children at the South; when General Armstrong educates the Indians, — when thus the blind are made to see and the deaf to hear, and the dead in mind and heart are raised to life, that is known to be the real coming of Christ. The old belief has passed away, that a better one may take its place. The old belief was a compromise with Judaism, which taught that Christ's kingdom was of this world, one of outward power and splendor. It thought that Jesus is to come hereafter as an outward king, with visible pomp and splendor, though at present his kingdom is inward and spiritual. But now we see that Christ always comes by

his spiritual presence in the mind and heart; that his joy is to reign in souls redeemed and sins forgiven; and that it would add nothing at all to his true glory to be made the visible monarch of the outward universe.

But the timid are alarmed at the sight of all these changes, and are afraid lest Christianity itself should pass away too. "Is there anything certain?" they ask; "anything stable and firm, anything to which we may cling, any anchor that will hold?" The apostle answers, Yes, three things, faith, hope, and love. "Now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

There are many, I know, to whom faith seems much less substantial, much less permanent, than knowledge. They imagine it to be the same thing as credulity, something quite unscientific. Those who walk by faith are regarded as weak-minded people, who believe, not what is true, but what is agreeable. They are supposed to believe in God, Christ, and immortality, not on evidence, not because these are realities, but because such beliefs are comforting and pleasant.

But the truth is that faith is the very life of the intellect, the essential condition of all knowledge. All that we know rests on the solid foundation of trust. Trust in certain immutable convictions, confidence in the veracity of our own faculties, reliance on the corresponding veracity of our fellow-

creatures, a profound faith in the stable order of the universe and the reign of universal law, — all this is faith, not knowledge. But without it knowledge were impossible. We must all begin by trusting our own faculties. We trust our senses. When we open our eyes and see the sun, the earth, the ocean, the faces of men and women, we believe that they are realities. This is an act of faith. When we hear the melodies of winds and woods and waters, the tones of affection, the words which bring to us comfort and peace, we rely on the reality of all this. Our senses may deceive us, yet we trust in them. We trust in our higher faculties; we believe the reports which consciousness gives to us of our own identity and personality, of the reality of right and wrong, good and evil, time and space, beauty, order, immortal truth. Thus faith is the foundation on which our knowledge rests, — faith in things unseen, behind and below whatever is seen.

All human action, all good endeavor, all the progress of civilization, is the work of faith. In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer says that "by faith" Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the great heroes of Israel accomplished their noble deeds. So it has been ever since. By faith the Apostle Paul crossed the Ægean Sea, and went from Asia to Europe to convert a new world to Christ. By faith the missionaries of the gospel went among the savage Goths

and Vandals with the same divine purpose, and saved Roman civilization from ruin. By faith, in later days, the Jesuits went among the North American Indians, and Livingstone among the African barbarians, not counting their lives dear, so that they might finish their course with joy. By faith Coster invented the printing-press; by faith Watt discovered the steam-engine, Stephenson the locomotive, Daguerre the sun-portraits. By faith Howard reformed the prisons; Wesley gave spiritual life to the lowest classes in England; Clarkson and Wilberforce abolished the slave-trade; Garrison and Abraham Lincoln put an end to slavery in the United States. By faith Dr. Howe penetrated into the darkness of Laura Bridgman's mind and carried knowledge there. By faith Channing, Bushnell, and Theodore Parker shook the pillars of irrational belief. By faith Robertson and Stanley gave a larger life to the Church of England.

Thus we see that faith abides, — faith in truths as yet unseen, in laws not yet discovered, in great realities outside of our present vision. All human knowledge, human endeavor, earthly progress, depends on faith that beyond what we know there is a great world of truth and good still to be discovered.

And this is, in reality, faith in God. For God is the eternal Truth, the omniscient Good. He is behind all things, before all things, and above all

things. We do not see him, but faith leads directly and inevitably to him.

Thus faith is like the primitive granite of our New England. Dig down deep and you come to it, below all superimposed strata. Go to the summit of the highest mountains and you find it, on the loftiest elevations. Faith begins as the basis of the infant's knowledge; it ends in leading us to know God, Christ, and immortality. Thus it abides with us always, the constant companion of our discovery and our knowledge.

And the child of faith is hope, equally immortal. Why do we believe in progress? Why do we try to make the world better? Why do men expect to improve their condition? It is because God has placed within the human heart this boundless expectation of something better to-morrow than we have to-day. The best evidence that there will be progress in this world and in the world to come is this, that hope is an abiding element in human nature. On this instinct rests, in a large degree, our belief in immortality, and a reunion with the loved and the lost in some better world beyond. And it is no delusion, no mere imagination, born of empty wishes. It rests on an immutable, unchangeable law of human nature planted in the soul by the Creator. It is more convincing than any argument, more reasonable than the most subtle logic. It says, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"Upon the frontier of this shadowy land
We, pilgrims of eternal sorrow, stand;
What realm lies forward with its happier shore,
With forests green and deep,
With valleys hushed in sleep,
And lakes most peaceful? 'T is the land of evermore."

But best and most blessed of all abiding things is love. Love is the spirit of life, and makes all things live. Without love, life is not worth living. It is in the first look of intelligence which we discover in the infant's eye; it is in the last feeble pressure of the hand of the dying. Nothing is so real as this; it alone has solidity, substance, and essential being. Selfishness is not enduring; in its very nature it destroys itself. The selfish man is only half alive. He sits alone, in a cold isolation of soul.

In all religions the most essential part is love. Christianity is the highest of all, because it sums up its whole law in these two articles, "Love God, and love man." Jesus does not say, "Believe this and that about God, about me, about sin and salvation." But he says, "Love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself." And amid all the changes of creeds, the strife of parties, the reforms and revolutions of the Church, this has been one of the unchanging factors. No heresy ever denied love; no papal decree ever denounced piety and humanity. Amid all these storms love continued; love had its abode in many an humble home, in

many a meek and trusting heart. In the hardest and most cruel days love prompted men and women to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, redeem the slave, cleanse the leper, and bring comfort to the forlorn.

Love abides. This is the very essence of Christianity, the soul within its soul. And this blessed gift comes direct from God. When the poor woman knelt at the feet of Jesus, he said, "She loves much because she has been forgiven much." Love is born out of our sin when we look to God for pardon, and find his comfort and peace descending into our heart. "We love him because he first loved us." There have been forms of Christian belief which represented God not as the universal Father, but as the inflexible Judge, who dooms to everlasting woe myriads of the creatures he has himself created. We cannot love such a being as this. Therefore the Church sometimes has substituted as the objects of its affection the Christ who took pity on our woe and came to redeem us, and the Blessed Virgin, who was represented as still more merciful than Christ.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The hour cometh when it will be seen that God is the best friend we have in the universe, and that he wishes us to trust in him always, and to pour out our souls before him.

These, then, are the unchanging, unalterable facts of Christianity. Faith is the foundation: faith in

God as an infinite Friend; faith in Christ as the way, the truth, and the life; faith in ourselves as the children of God, whom he loves, and who, therefore, must have something in us worth loving. And hope, always reaching forward, seeking, praying, working for a kingdom of heaven to come below, for a kingdom of God to begin here and continue hereafter. And love, the bright consummate flower of human life, that which is essentially and forever divine, which makes us one with God and at peace in our own souls. Faith is the foundation on which our knowledge rests; Hope is the motive-power urging us forward from good to better; and Love the heaven within, which makes a heaven around us evermore.

IV.

EMPHASIS IN RELIGION AND LIFE.

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WE all recognize the importance of true emphasis in speech and reading. A person who reads or speaks without emphasis is monotonous, and monotony wearies. A person who has too much emphasis in his speech also wearies us; by emphasizing everything, important or unimportant, he makes every part of his sentence equally important, therefore equally *un*important. Emphasis placed on the wrong word changes the meaning of the passage. Or, as is more frequently the case, there may be different modes of emphasizing a sentence, all more or less correct, but some better than the others. Thus in pronouncing a sentence consisting of only two words, in the play of "Macbeth," it is said that Mrs. Siddons changed her mode of emphasizing them twice. It is in the scene where Macbeth and his wife are discussing the murder of the old king. Macbeth says, "If we should fail?" Lady Macbeth replies, "We fail!" She first emphasized "fail," uttering these words as though failure were impossible — "We *fail!*"

Afterwards she emphasized the "we," as though failure by such people as *they* was impossible — "*We* fail!" Finally she found a still better emphasis, implying that if they failed, they failed, and that was the end of it — "*We fail.*"

Nothing needs more care and emphasis in reading than the Bible. If emphasis can change the very meaning of a passage, substituting a false meaning for a true one, or one less true for one of more importance, it is clear that even an inspired book loses its inspiration if read the wrong way. The same passage, read by different persons, may mean different things. A bad reader may change the sense of the words of Paul, or the words of Christ himself, and make them say what was not intended. Or, what happens more frequently, a poor emphasis may leave the sense vague and obscure, while a different stress on the words will make the meaning simple and clear. Indeed, a wrong emphasis may change the sense as much as a wrong translation.

Take that familiar passage from Paul commonly read thus: "If it be *possible*, as much as *lieth in* you, live peaceably with all men." The meaning then is that no man *can* always be peaceful, even in his own spirit. But suppose we emphasize the "you." "If it be possible, as much as lieth in *you*, live peaceably with all men." Then it would mean that *you* can, at any rate, be peaceable toward others, though you may not be able always to make them peaceable toward you.

When Paul says, "We are laborers together with God; ye are God's *husbandry;* ye are God's *building,*" how much deeper does the meaning become by laying the emphasis on "God." "Ye are *God's* husbandry; ye are *God's* building."

In another place Paul says, "*Receive* us; we have *wronged* no man, we have defrauded no man." But the true meaning appears by a little change of emphasis, "Receive *us; we* have wronged no man, *we* have defrauded no man," for they were receiving those who had wronged and defrauded, and yet would not receive him.

"All things are for your sakes, that the abundant *grace* might, through the *thanks*giving of many, redound to the glory of God." If the emphasis be laid on the three words, "abundant," "many," and "redound," how much more full of meaning the passage becomes!

In the last conversation of Jesus with his disciples there is a passage which we often hear read thus: "Now, ye are *clean* through the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in *me*, and I in *you.*" But read it thus: "*Now,* ye are clean through the *word* that I have spoken unto you. *Abide* in me, and I in you." His influence and words had made their souls pure at that moment; but they must *abide* in him in order to continue so.

For many years I read a passage of the Sermon on the Mount thus: "Salt is *good;* but if the salt has lost its *savor,* wherewith shall it be *salted?*"

I think most persons will agree with me that a better rendering is this: "*Salt* is good; but if the *salt* has lost its savor, wherewith shall *it* be salted?"

I will give only one more example. In that noble passage of Paul, read so often in the burial-service, I think the force is frequently weakened by too much emphasis: "It is *sown* in *corruption*, it is *raised* in *incorruption*; it is *sown* in *weakness*, it is *raised* in *power*; it is *sown* a *natural* body, it is *raised* a *spiritual* body." A better way, more natural, more simple, more effective, I think, is this: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in *in*corruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in *power*; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a *spiritual* body."

But true and false emphasis apply not only to language, but also to thought, to action, to life.

True emphasis in thought consists in seeing what is central, fundamental, vital, in any subject, and bringing that out distinctly. You listen to two lawyers arguing a case. One emphasizes the main point, the pivot on which all depends, and makes that so clear and so convincing that it is impossible to question or doubt it. The other may say many true and strong things; but they are so mixed up with weaker reasons, so tangled with secondary considerations, that they lose half their weight. This power of intellectual emphasis was very marked in Daniel Webster, and was the secret of much of his force. It often makes a great difference

between preachers. I have listened to sermons which contained many excellent thoughts and important truths, but none were made prominent enough to be remembered. The power of the late George Putnam consisted in his having one important thought in each sermon, which he illustrated and enforced by various arguments, and to which he held from beginning to end. Therefore you remembered each of his sermons, and its one moral remained with you. Intellectual power consists in a large degree in being able to see what truths are primary, fundamental, and essential, the master-lights of all our seeing. It is to hold these primary truths rooted in the mind as unchanging convictions, solid as the granite foundations of the earth. The mind which has no such settled convictions is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Such a mind, unable to grasp any truth firmly, or to arrive at a definite conclusion on any subject, is necessarily a weak one. To hold ourselves in doubt while our opinions are not formed is right; but to still doubt our conclusion after we have come to it and seen it clearly, shows a want of mental vigor. Mr. Emerson once said, "I am a perpetual seeker, with no past behind me." But he certainly did not mean by this that he was without fixed convictions, for no man has been more constant than he to certain primary truths; no one has had more mental emphasis of thought and utterance than he.

True emphasis in morals consists in laying stress where stress ought to be laid, and making that important which ought to be so. The lives of many good men want emphasis. They are negatively good. Their goodness is not pronounced. They seem to drift rather than steer. But goodness implies, first of all, having a good aim, a good intention, meaning something, aiming steadily at something. Alas! the lives of so many have no emphasis. They do things because others do them, because it is the custom to do them, not because it is right. But how invigorating it is to see those who are a law to themselves, who are ready to do what is right whether other men hear or forbear. These men are the salt of society. They may often seem harsh, severe, intolerant; but their intolerance is better than the weak concession of so many. I would rather be criticised, though unjustly, by a righteous man, than have the commendation of a thoughtless multitude.

In our complex society we need stress laid on right purpose to call our attention to what is good. Therefore we have societies for different good objects, each laying emphasis on some one thing. The temperance societies emphasize temperance, and oppose the indulgence which does so much harm. They call attention to the misery which comes from drink; the woe, the cruel sufferings of wives and children resulting from this awful social curse. The societies to prevent cruelty to animals

emphasize the right of our poor dumb brethren, whom God has given us to protect, and whom we so often ill treat and abuse. Such a society does what no individual can. It compels the inattentive public to see that animals have rights which we are all bound to respect. It was well when a man in Plymouth was sent to the State Prison for three years for cruelly maiming a horse; for this punishment will make hundreds of others understand that horses also have the great arm of law stretched out for their protection. If the Abolition Society had not so strenuously emphasized the great wrong of slavery, we might never have had emancipation. Other societies emphasize the rights of children, the rights of the poor, the rights of women to equality before the law. I think we need them all. We need to have our dull attention constantly recalled to these claims. We may think the advocates of some particular reforms extravagant, we may think that what they say is in bad taste, that they lay an undue emphasis on this or that method; but the important thing is to have each and all of these reforms made distinct and clear, to keep men from forgetting them. We ought to be willing to tolerate a little intolerance in a good cause, for the essential thing is to have some one who shall cry aloud and spare not when the community sleeps over an evil. If there is too much steam, it may easily blow itself off; but at all events let us have enough to make the vessel move forward.

A friend brought to me a day or two since a great curiosity, one of the most precious autographs I ever saw. It was the identical letter written in 1775 by Benjamin Franklin to a member of Parliament who had voted for the stamp act and other oppressive acts of the British Government toward the colonies. It ran thus: —

PHILADELPHIA, July 5, 1775.

Mr. STRAHAN, — *Sir*: You are a member of Parliament, and one of that Majority which has doomed my country to Destruction. You have begun to burn our Towns and murder our People. Look upon your Hands. They are stained with the Blood of your Relatives. You and I were long Friends. You are now my Enemy, and I am Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

There is emphasis in that letter. It gives no uncertain sound.

Why do we keep the birthday of Washington? We reverence Washington, not merely as the great commander, whose perfect judgment, patience, fortitude, carried the country through the Revolution; not only as the wise statesman on whom the nation leaned during its hours of uncertainty, but most of all as a man whose life was emphasized by conscience. As long as the memory of Washington lasts, we know that there is such a thing as unbending principle, unconquerable patriotism. No matter how many great men prove false or weak, we know that there is such a thing as justice and

honor. How wonderful is the power which goes forth from such a life! After centuries have passed, it is still the strength of a people, — the inspiration of national character. If Washington's goodness had not possessed this emphasis, it could not have exercised such an influence.

In religion also true emphasis consists in laying enough stress, and in laying it on the right thing. If there is a God who protects and cares for us, in whom we live and move and breathe, to whom we are accountable, a Father and Friend and Helper, what is more essential in our life than this? It is either nothing or all. Yet continually our religious life tends to be a mere habit, — our faith shrinks to an opinion; inspiration ceases out of our days; we have no open vision; we live by the memory of a past experience. Therefore we need always to have men and women near us whose religion has emphasis, who do not think they believe, but speak that which they know and testify of what they have seen. This renews our own life. Blessed be God, who never leaves himself without some such witness of his truth. These persons, in whom religious conviction is no vain repetition of past belief, but a fountain of new life, new love, free as air, fresh as the morning, cheerful as sunshine, solid as the primitive rock, — these are they who make God seem present and real to us also, and immortality close at hand. These are the men and women whom God sends as his

prophets from age to age,—the Roman Catholic and Protestant saints, Saint Francis, Charles Borromeo, Wesley, the Huguenots, Channing,—to rouse men from their dreary sleep in routine and sin.

But there is always danger, not only of too little religious emphasis, but also of wrong emphasis. We may lay stress on unessential things till we fail to see what is essential. That was why Jesus blamed the Pharisees. They insisted on matters of secondary importance; they gave tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, and forgot the weightier matters of the law,—judgment, mercy, faith, love. They put the religious emphasis in the wrong place.

So now the emphasis in religion is put in the wrong place when it is laid on profession, ritual, sacraments, creeds, instead of upon life and character. The prophets never committed this mistake. "To what purpose the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am weary to bear them. Cease to do evil; learn to do well. Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow," is the message of Isaiah. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," says the Book of Ecclesiastes. "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." "What doth the Lord require of thee," said the prophet Micah, "but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" And Jesus summed up the whole law in love to God and man.

The perfect emphasis of the life of Christ has been one source of his authority over mankind. In him everything had its proper place,— nothing excessive, nothing wanting. The great purpose of his being was to do the will of his Father, to be about his Father's business, to finish the work given him to do. But while the main current of his course ran steadily toward this end, he could also feel for human sorrows, help the sufferers, be glad with the happy, and weep with the sad. So his life was full, rounded, and harmonious. This is what Paul means by "the fulness of the stature of Christ."

The other day I saw that a man had put on his wife's gravestone the words, "She was saved by the atonement of Christ." But the atonement, as usually understood, is a doctrine *about* Christ, and no one can be saved by such a dogma. The emphasis was wrong. How much better the inscriptions in the Catacombs: "She is safe *in* Christ," "She is at peace *in* God," "She rests *in* hope."

We sometimes listen to speakers who, by emphasizing every sentence and word, fail to make anything emphatic. A like harm is done by religious talk, which carries words about religion into everything, and so becomes cant. But when a man who is not in the habit of talking about his religion says a single word which shows his faith in God and eternity, it makes an impression on us. Abraham Lincoln did not generally pass for a religious

man. His religion was too deep down, too far in, for many words. All the more we value the evidence we have of it. We learn from Mr. Chase that when Lincoln finally told his Cabinet that he was determined to sign the Emancipation Proclamation, he said: "I have waited till I am sure the time has come. The nation is ready for it. The best men demand it. Besides," he added, in a low tone, as if speaking to himself, "I promised my God, when Lee was driven out of Maryland, that I would do it." When an earnest man says a thing like that, we know that he has been walking with God.

To put the right emphasis into our lives, we also must walk with God. Churches, Sundays, Bibles, are important as influences; but the emphasis of life must go beyond them all, down to that region of the soul where man is alone with his God. That alone gives us strength in our weakness, comfort in our sorrow, and makes our life here lean the right way. We must have an inward personal conviction, a faith which goes below all language, which is like that of a child who simply holds his father's hand and so feels safe. God comes near to us when we might be afraid to come near him. So he fills our days with sweetness and strength, lifts us above forms, solemn words and looks, reliance on ritual, worry about opinions and churches, and gives us a life hid with Christ in himself.

V.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

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TO speak the truth, or what seems to be truth to us, is not a very hard thing, provided we do not care what harm we do by it, or whom we hurt by it. This kind of "truth-telling" has been always common. Such truth-tellers call themselves plain, blunt men, who say what they think, and do not care who objects to it. A man who has a good deal of self-reliance and not much sympathy, can get a reputation for courage by this way of speaking the truth. But the difficulty about it is, that truth thus spoken does not convince or convert men; it only offends them. It is apt to seem unjust; and injustice is not truth.

Some persons think that unless truth is thus hard and disagreeable it cannot be pure. Civility toward error seems to them treason to the truth. Truth to their mind is a whip with which to lash men, a club with which to knock them down. They regard it as an irritant adapted to arouse sluggish consciences.

I recollect once, at an Antislavery meeting in former days, one of the sterner sort of Abolitionists suddenly sprang to his feet, and said, "We are not doing our duty. See how quietly and peacefully the audience are listening to us. If we were doing our duty, they would be throwing brickbats at us!"

In the same way it has been a common theory in the religious world that the natural human heart is so opposed to truth that any doctrine which does not offend men must be false. They forget that the common people heard Jesus gladly, and that when the apostles first preached the gospel, three thousand persons gladly received the word, and were baptized.

To speak the truth is very necessary. More of plain, honest, kindly, affectionate truth-telling is much wanted in the world. Very few people get the truth told them which they need to hear and ought to hear. People say behind their backs what is never said to their face. A fault which they might easily correct, if they knew of it, they continue to commit all their lives, because they have no friend manly enough or kind enough to tell them of it. Therefore if you can find a truth-teller honest, direct, straightforward, and at the same time kind, sympathizing, and loving, you have found a friend worth more than diamonds. And if I had to choose between those who never tell me my faults and those who tell them too rudely, I ought infinitely rather to prefer the harsh and rough truth to the mild and civil falsehood.

Saadi, the Persian poet, tells this story: "A preacher of a harsh tone of voice fancied himself a fine-spoken man; but the croaking of a raven seemed the burden of his chant, and his voice was like the braying of an ass. In reverence for his rank, his townsmen indulged the defect, and would not distress him by remarking on it, till another preacher, who disliked him, came and said, 'I have seen you in a dream; may it prove fortunate.' He replied, 'What have you seen?' He answered, 'It seemed in my vision that your croaking voice had become harmonious.' For a while the preacher bowed his head in thought, then raised it, and said: 'What a fortunate vision, which has made me sensible of my weakness! I am now aware that I have an unpleasant voice, and that the people are distressed at my delivery. I will try, henceforth, to speak more softly. My friends distress me who extol my vices as though they were virtues, and regard my thorns as roses. Where is that rude enemy who will tell me all my deformities?'"

Schiller, the German poet, tells us, in one of his couplets, much the same thing:—

"My friend helps me; my foe is also useful to me.
The one shows me what I am able to be; the other, what I ought to be."

And Confucius, the wise man of China, says in his "Table Talk": "I am a fortunate man; if I do anything wrong, I am sure to be told of it."

But we are not all as noble as Schiller and Confucius, and therefore we are apt to resent being charged with faults and follies of which we are not aware. Hence it is important that, while we are told the truth, we should be told it in such a way as to make us feel that it is spoken, not as cold criticism, not in a tone of superiority, not as if the speaker took pleasure in fault-finding; but as the faithful wound of a friend, the truth which is married to love, the higher generosity which is willing to encounter our resentment in order to do good to our soul.

To tell truth in this way is a high art, and comes from a noble temper. Happy is he who has such a friend, — a friend able to see the good and the evil in his heart, whose love is full of insight, recognizing every good purpose, every longing after right, every conflict with wrong, and who yet can see and say what more is needed, what better things may be done. What higher compliment can be paid us than faith that we are strong enough to be told of our faults, that we are magnanimous enough to wish to know them? The world is sick because of shams, pretences, empty shows, forms which have nothing left in them but dead habit. Every age needs its prophets to rouse it from its deadly sleep in some dear, delightful falsehood. These prophets have a hard time of it; they are usually stoned, beaten, killed; they have to make their faces hard as a flint, and to speak their word whether men

will hear or forbear. They have a prophet's reward, — hard work, plenty of opposition; but an inward conviction that they are right, and must triumph at last.

Truth is the salt of the earth. What is life good for without it? What is any man good for who does not care for truth? If you ask yourself why you respect any one, you will find it to be because there is in him an element of truth. He has real convictions. He believes something. He cares for matters outside his own selfish interests; he is moved to joy by the sight of what is just and generous; he is thrilled with indignation by the knowledge of what is wicked. He believes in the things unseen; he believes in God; he believes in some great divine power above all, through all, in all. He may be a Pagan, and call God Jupiter; he may be a Hindoo, and call him Brahm; he may be a Calvinist, and believe God an arbitrary being who makes some of his children for heaven and some for hell, — but, at all events, he believes something, and that is better than not believing. Without belief there is no earnestness, and without earnestness life is intolerable. Unless we are in earnest about something, what is the use of living?

To believe something, even if it be mixed with error, is better than to believe nothing; for belief implies the love of truth, and this is the first step toward truth itself. There are two kinds of truth: inward truth, truth to one's self, or truthfulness;

and secondly, knowledge of reality, or outward truth. Both kinds of truth are essential to goodness and happiness. They make the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, going forward and going backward.

But, beside truth, there is another and an opposite virtue, which is love. These two make up the whole of goodness. Truth is one element, and love the other. They are different and opposite qualities, but necessary to each other. Neither will suffice alone.

Some men have truth but have not love. Their truth is hard, cold, overbearing, dogmatical. They do not speak it in love. They drive men, they do not lead them. There is nothing attractive, magnetic, about them. They scold and rail at those who differ from them. We cannot but feel a certain respect for them, but we do not like them. What they say may be the truth, but we are not attracted by it. Truth without love does not seem beautiful.

So there are other men who have love but not truth. They are full of good-will, overflowing with sympathy, but do not help us, because they have no stamina, no strength of their own. They are disposed to give to others, but they have nothing to give. They sympathize with us whether we are right or wrong, good or bad. They are a "mush of concession." Their love, being without truth, does not do us good.

If you try to carry out truth or love to its

ultimate separately, you spoil both. Take for example the case of a man who is in love with truth. "I will tell the truth always," he says, "regardless of consequences." What, will you tell a madman the truth? Will you tell a child the whole truth? Will you always tell all the truth to every one? Will you have no reserve? By such a course society would be dissolved. The early Quakers tried this plan. They tried to be perfectly truthful; to have their yea, yea, and their nay, nay. They said thee instead of you, because to use the plural number when speaking to one man seemed to them false. One Quaker refused to wear clothes which had been dyed, because it involved deception. But what was the result? Avoiding forms and wishing to follow the immediate impulse of the Spirit, they present the curious anomaly of an outcome of the most rigid formalism. Truth in the letter at last seemed to harden and freeze, and to destroy truth in the spirit. This is the inevitable result of a one-sided development.

Every good character is composed of truth and love. Think of the person you have loved best in the world. It was some one who had a character of his own, rooted in the love of truth and right, who would not give way, but stood firm according to his conscience; but who, while thus strong in himself, was tender and generous toward others. He could forgive others, and be more tolerant toward them than toward himself.

It is this union of sincerity and good-will which constitutes the nobleness of man. The man who is strong in some rooted convictions, who stands firm on his sense of right, and yet whose generosity flows steadily in a current of helpfulness to those around him, is the pillar of society. Such men are the pivots around which progress and improvement turn. They give beauty and dignity to a community.

This twofold element of truth and love must go into every action to make it good. Every good deed must partake of both qualities. If I do a kind act simply from good nature; if I give money merely because I am asked to give it, without stopping to think whether it is right to do it and if it will do real good, then my good nature is the merest weakness; it has no substance in it. It is only the selfish desire to escape trouble. On the other hand, if I am honest, just, and truthful in anything merely for my own sake, and do not care how my honesty or truth helps or hurts others; if I blurt out unnecessarily and harshly whatever I think to be truth, then my truth ceases to be truth, and becomes only self-will and obstinacy. You cannot find a single good action which has not involved in it this twofold element, and in proportion as they are well balanced, goodness grows into beauty, and conduct is not only right, but also lovely.

One of the peculiarities of Jesus was that in him

the love of truth and the love of man were in complete harmony. His truth was never hard, his kindness never weak. His justice was not cold law; his tenderness no effeminate good nature. His love had an edge to it; it was no rose-water philanthropy. He was the most earnest reformer who ever appeared in the world; and yet we do not think of him as such, because his severity was so filled with warmth, and with that actinic ray which makes all seeds swell, all buds open into blossom. Yet look at it. He came to take up many things by the roots, this most uncompromising of radicals. He seemed to the Jews to overthrow all that was most venerable in their religion. Jerusalem was no sacred city to him. Man may worship God everywhere. The Sabbath is no holy day in itself, but only good as it serves man; the Temple must pass away, with its awful and holy ceremonies. He instituted a religion without priest, temple, altar, book, or day. In the destructive analysis of his criticism all forms and creeds were dissolved, and nothing remained but love to God and man. And yet all this destruction was so constantly for the sake of something positive, that he could say truly, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." The Jewish Sabbath went, but it was fulfilled in the profound peace of hearts resting from all anxiety in the grace of God. The Temple passed, but worship remained, the worship of a little child clinging to his father's hand. The law of Moses

came to an end, but that also was fulfilled in a joy which was its own security, in love which was an unerring light. Jesus in his word and in his life was truth spoken in love. His love went out further than human love had ever gone, so that it reached those furthest out and furthest away. His perfect holiness and purity led him to condemn all sin, but his perfect humanity led him to save every sinner. Thus in him mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. Since he, so pure and holy, could yet love the sinner and give his life for him, we see how God can love us, even when we are most sinful and evil.

All conflicts of duty resolve themselves at last into this antagonism of truth and love. If you ever feel a real difficulty as to what your duty is, you will find, on looking into it, that truth seems to be pulling you one way and love the other. A man comes to you with a tale of woe. Love says, "Help him." Truth says, "No. Perhaps he is an impostor. In that case, your helping him will do harm, not good." You hear things said and done in society which seem to you false and evil. Truth says, "Protest against them. Denounce them. Expose them." Love replies, "No. What right have you to stab, cut, wound people who may be right after all? And what good will it do? It will only displease and offend them." You see many customs and habits which appear false and evil. Truth says, "Come out and be separate from them. Do

not conform. Go your own way. Do what seems to you to be right, no matter what others may think or say." Love says, "No! That will do no good. They will not understand you, and you will lose all your influence by such eccentricity." We are constantly tormented by these difficulties; these cases of conscience come every day to every conscientious person, and most of them at last will be found to resolve themselves into this eternal antagonism of truth on the one side and love on the other.

And the solution of such difficulties is to be sought, not in thought, but in life. Intellectually, many of these difficulties are insoluble. The old Catholic writers wrote volumes of casuistry, or works on cases of conscience, in which they tried to find an intellectual solution for these moral difficulties. That literature is forgotten, for it was ineffectual and useless. But if a man is living in the spirit of Christ, if he is full of the love of truth, the sense of justice, honor, purity, virtue, and at the same time full of humanity, good-will, charity; then, when a difficulty comes, he will discover some practical solution. In proportion to the fulness of his religious life the solution will be the most profitable and satisfactory.

Truth without love, in religion, is dogmatism. It is overbearing, cold, bitter. It hunts for heresies, and persecutes the heretic. Truth without love founded the Inquisition, tortured and burned unbelieving Jews and Protestants. Its zeal is cruel.

In modern times, truth without love does not persecute, but it slanders — it is unrelenting, unsympathizing. It is a curious fact that a religious newspaper, carried on in the interest of a sect, is often just as one-sided and partisan as a political newspaper, and has as little Christianity in it.

Truth without love, in education, created that harsh system in which knowledge was driven into the minds of children by blows, and the beauties of science, literature, art, were made odious to the child's mind by associations with scolding and punishment. Fortunately for the coming generation that brutal system is passing away, and little children can hereafter take their fill of knowledge with gladness of heart.

Truth without love, in the home, makes it cold and cheerless. The inmates may do their duty to each other, but without any genial sympathy. Thus home becomes prosaic and uninteresting, and life grows gray and the vital spring is gone.

The cure for these evils is more faith in God and a better religion. We can unite truth with love, love with truth, only as we are in communion with Him, the fountain of spiritual life. That union makes the soul at once tender and strong, pure and generous, just and merciful. We can pardon weakness in others, because we know we so much need pardon ourselves. When we see in God the infinite, all-embracing tenderness, the power which is also goodness, the Father who cares for every child,

who seeks and saves the lost, and rejoices over the repentance of every sinner, we also can care for the souls of others and take a real interest in them.

The true atonement of Christ was not that he made it possible for God to forgive his penitent children, for God always could and did forgive the penitent. But it was showing, in his own person and character, how truth and love are one, how righteousness and peace kiss each other, and that there is no contradiction between justice and mercy. By thus uniting them in himself, he showed that they are one in God; that God can be just and yet forgive his penitent child; that as Jesus was holy and yet loving, God, the all-holy, can be all-loving too. Thus he enables us to trust in God, notwithstanding our faults, and come confidently to the throne of omnipotence to find grace to help in time of need.

And as Jesus has manifested this in his life, and revealed God's holiness and love as one, so every good man and woman can be a revelation of God in the same way. Every one whom we have known in whom justice and mercy were united, has helped us to see the same union in God, and so has brought us near to him.

Let us, therefore, aim high; let us not be satisfied with a one-sided virtue. If we are naturally sympathetic, let us add to this, strength of principle and the love of truth. If we are by nature conscientious and truthful, let us also be tender,

kind, merciful and generous; and so become the true children of our Father in heaven, who lets his sun shine on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust.

In order that the love of truth may not pass into empty debate and verbal controversy, it must be joined with the spirit of love which comes from Christianity. The man who leads a religious life, who is sensible of God's presence and his own accountability, who breathes every day a prayer to Heaven that he may be saved from evil and helped into good, who looks up every day for pardon, comfort, and strength, and looks abroad every day to find how to serve his Master and Saviour, — he will speak the truth, but speak it in love. He will avoid both extremes. The spirit within him will guide him aright. That which no study of the casuists could teach him will be done for him by the spirit of Christ in his heart. That will lead him along the narrow path of duty, will make him faithful, yet gentle; true, yet kind; firm in his purpose, mild in his method; inflexible in his principles, liberal in his judgments. When such a one speaks or acts we feel in him this completeness or fulness of the moral nature; he is not one-sided, not extreme; he walks at liberty and he walks securely; being led by the spirit of God, he becomes a son of God.

VI.

UNTRANSLATABLE WORDS.

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EVERY one knows that, strictly speaking, most words are almost untranslatable. It is always hard to find an exact equivalent for any word which has much meaning. There are no exact synonymes for such words in their own language, and nothing precisely corresponding to them in another. But this difficulty is immensely increased when these words have any subtle aroma, any particular charm, any delicate sentiment attached to them. Then they become absolutely untranslatable. The very quality which distinguishes them disappears when they are transferred into a different phrase. This makes the desperate nature of the attempt to translate poetry from one language into another, for a large part of the charm of poetic language lies in the subtle associations connected with each word. We read Virgil or Horace in the best English translations, and wonder how they can ever have been considered such great writers. Their peculiar aroma has evaporated while they were being poured from one receptacle into another. The reverse takes

place which was suggested in the parable, for the *old* wine has burst the *new* bottles, and the wine has been spilled.

Hence it happens that foreign words are so often transported bodily from one language into another, or left untranslated when quoted for any purpose. Words which cannot be translated from the Latin, Greek, French, German, are adopted into English, and naturalized. Thus every language is enriched by the best phrases of every other. This, no doubt, often leads to pedantry, conscious or unconscious. Foreign words are used when English ones would do as well, or better. So we have introduced the German word "hand-book," when we already had a word with precisely the same meaning, "manual," and with a better sound. But generally these immigrations from foreign parts enrich our own literature.

Sometimes words are left untranslated because they seem untranslatable. Shakspeare has done this, as when the dying Cæsar reproaches Brutus with the words, "And thou, too, Brutus!" Shakspeare has left it in the Latin, "*Et tu, Brute!* Then die, Cæsar." There seems something incongruous in putting a Latin and an English clause together in the same line. But Shakspeare, no doubt, found something in the Latin to which no English words — not even his own — could do justice.

The English and German Bibles, as translations, are as nearly perfect as anything can be, — I mean as a whole, and in their impression on the mind.

There are errors, no doubt, which ought to be corrected; but the simplicity, pathos, sublimity of the language cannot be surpassed. In these great Teutonic tongues strength and tenderness blend, as in the original writings. Unfortunately, the language which was spoken by Jesus and his disciples in Galilee has disappeared. There is no gospel extant in the words which were uttered on the lake shore or in Capernaum. A few fragments, however, of that old speech remain in the New Testament,—certain words so full of tender and heavenly associations that they were left untranslated in the Greek gospels, and still remain untranslated in our English Testament.

Of these I will mention five,—four of them uttered by Jesus, and one by Mary Magdalene. Two of these were expressions of power; one was a cry of anguish; another was an utterance of ununspeakable tenderness; the last, of the most ardent faith.

We read that Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, came to Jesus, earnestly praying him to come and heal his little daughter, who was at the point of death. Jesus comes to the house, goes into the room with only three of his disciples — Peter, James, and John — and the father and mother of the little girl, who was twelve years old. Having put out those whom he found in the room, he called, saying, "Maid, arise!" This is what Luke says, who, of course, was not present. Matthew,

he who was not in the room, says no more. But Mark, who reports the traditions which came from Peter, who *was* present, gives the very words uttered by Christ in the language of the people, "*Talitha cumi!*" These literally mean, "My lamb, arise!" Peter heard those words; he heard the divine tones of the voice, the spirit of Jesus going from him at that moment with power which penetrated the dull ear of death, and poured a mighty vital influence into the brain and nervous centres. There was a quality in those two words which could not be translated. If there is such a thing as verbal inspiration, it is found here in words instinct with some divine influence.

In the same Gospel of Mark a similar quotation of the original occurs — where Jesus cures the deaf man. The very Aramaic term which he uttered is given, "*Eph-phatha!*" — "be opened!" There was something also in that phrase which could not be translated, some thrilling tone from the depths of the soul, full of power to reach the seat of life in the soul of the sufferer.

Have we not all heard some such tone of command, of authority, when the whole force of human will seems to rush into the voice, and give it such power that all who hear are swept away by the irresistible current? Such was the authority of the great Lord Chatham, who carried in his very tones a weight of command which no man on the floor of the House of Commons could resist.

Many qualities of the soul go to make this eloquence. Sincerity, conviction, determination, courage, intense purpose. But in the voice of Jesus how much more! There was in it something not human merely, but divine; a heavenly influence, an angelic force coming from on high. No wonder that Peter could never forget those syllables, which went into his heart and engraved themselves there forever.

Another of those untranslatable sentences was that uttered on the cross, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!*" It was spoken from the depths of a "divine despair." What profound pathos in that terrible cry, the most dreadful, perhaps, ever uttered on the earth! Oh, children of sorrow, who count up your miseries and complain of Providence, listen to that wail which comes down through the centuries in the very words in which it was spoken! What are our woes and sorrows, our selfish and momentary losses? Has not that mighty heart throbbed with a deeper anguish than all of ours? He has explored that mystery of evil far below the depths our plummet can sound; for it takes a mighty soul to bear a mighty sorrow. Our agonies are for a day, and for ourselves alone. He saw and felt for the miseries of mankind. For a moment the world seemed to him forsaken of God, left to go its own way into ruin. That was the blackest hour ever seen on earth, when even the hope of Jesus was darkened, though but for a moment. I know that he quoted the language of the Psalm of David, but surely

took that language because it best expressed his own sense of being forsaken of his Father, of being for that one short instant without God in the world. And thus we have him for our companion in the deepest of all woes. When to us all things seem to go wrong, and there is no sun in the skies, no hope, no courage, no sense of human or divine love; even then there is one stay left, that Jesus has been down even as low as that into despair, and has returned to the bosom of the Father's love. This is the anchor which holds still. There needs no scholastic dogma of God's wrath having been laid on him, no theological figment of his being punished in our place. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows in a more human sense, by being tried in all points as we are, and yet remaining sinless. Having suffered such trials, he is able to help us, tried in the same way. If there is any one to whom life seems very dark, and God far away, remember that Jesus, God's blessed son, has also felt this weight of woe, and yet risen above it all.

The next untranslated word I will mention is that uttered, not by Jesus himself, but to him, by Mary Magdalene, when she first recognized him on the morning of the resurrection. It was the echo returned by her voice to the depths of love in his own. "Jesus said to her, Mary! She answered, *Rabboni!* that is, Master!" Why was that foreign word left in the record? Because there was a sound in it which no other could convey. When Mary

came back and told her story, and they asked her, "What did you say?" she answered, I suppose, "I could say nothing. I could only burst forth in one wild cry of wonder, joy, love, — *Rabboni!*" And when she repeated it to them there still lingered in the words the same tones.

Oh, marvellous history! instinct throughout with all the experiences of the human heart; how we find continually as we study it fresh proofs of its reality! How dull our eyes if they do not see in it the very inspiration of truth! How human nature shows itself in every line of this divine narrative!

Have we not felt hours of similar joy, when, after years of routine and sin, of discouragement and doubt, we also seem again to meet the full smile of God? Are there not moments when this tide of heavenly love comes to us, and when Jesus our Master seems a real living person by our side? He has been nailed to the cross by our sin, he has been buried in the tomb of our black despair, he has been swathed in the winding-sheet of some hard theology, or our Lord has been taken away from us by the bigot or the sceptic. We know not where they have laid him. The dear human friend of our childhood and youth has gone, and in his place we have critical doubts or theological discussions. One man, with vast labor and ingenuity, resolves that dear life into legends and myths. Another makes of it a supernatural mystery. But at

last, as we read the Gospels, the whole humanity of Jesus reappears to us. We see him there again as we saw him in our childhood, our dear human brother. He walks by our side once more, and our heart burns within us by the way. We forget all these doubts and questions; we leave them behind; we care not concerning questions of natural and supernatural; the mists of controversy are dissipated, and the face of our best friend appears to us again to forgive, to comfort, to give us rest, and with Mary we can only say, "*Rabboni!* — Master!"

These little incidental proofs of the truth of the Gospel story are the most valuable of all. These cannot be counterfeited. They are hidden deep in the texture of the story, and only appear when we look very closely at the narrative. But they are like the circumstantial evidence, which, when woven into a complete chain, becomes irresistible. A thousand little traits, each in itself insignificant, combine to produce an overwhelming sense of reality.

I will speak of only one other specimen of the remains of an ancient language which thus continues imbedded in the strata of successive translations. It is that in which Jesus cries in his prayer in the garden, "*Abba!* Father!" That word *abba* was the Aramaic-Syrian form of the infant's first uttered word, and equivalent to "papa" in our speech. Paul refers to it afterwards when he says, "Because we are sons, God has put his spirit

in our hearts, by which we cry, Abba! Father!" The disciples did not often hear their Master use this word. It was not worn hard by familiarity. It had not become a mere phrase, as it too often is to us. It kept all the freshness of its first impression. Jesus did not pray much in public. He went alone into the mountain to pray. He told his disciples to go into their closets to pray, and to shut the door. He did not approve praying at the corners of the streets to be seen of men. Therefore I suppose even the disciples did not hear him pray very often. But sometimes he wished them to be with him; he longed to have them by his side while he prayed. And then they heard this wonderful word, "*Abba*," from his lips, and they never forgot the tone in which it was said: "*Abba!* Father! if it be possible let this cup pass away; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Such words brought heaven near to them and made God real. I think that they had never before dreamed of the possibility of such intimacy between man and God.

To us, too often, in our prayers, God seems far away,—some vast power in the distant depths of the universe. Our prayers are mere forms, empty repetitions, words, and nothing more. But sometimes God himself puts his spirit into our hearts, and enables us to cry "*Abba!* Father!" At once he seems very near and very real. His divine arms are beneath us, and we rest safe and sure.

Though all else may forget us and forsake us, he will never do so. No matter how weak we are, how sinful we are, he can forgive, not seventy times seven, as he tells us to do, but innumerable sevens, and myriads of seventies. This is the one love which no sin can weary, and of which Jesus is the blessed image to us evermore. Deep-rooted in the heart, this faith in God's fatherly tenderness grows ever more certain and more strong, and this is the Gospel against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. The Father is greater than all, and no one shall pluck his children out of their Father's hand.

When we can thus see God as our Father, we may be sure that he has put the spirit into our heart by which we see it. To be able really to believe in the fatherly love of the infinite Ruler of all worlds is itself so marvellous an act that it can hardly proceed from human will or power.

Yet how simple, childlike, natural, is this experience! This is one of the great facts of the universe, which is hidden from the wise and the prudent and revealed unto babes.

I see a wise and good man sitting in his study. He is a conscientious seeker after truth, but he thinks he must seek it by the pure light of the intellect alone. He has adopted the maxim that "dry light is the best." He wishes to prove every opinion he holds. He wishes to demonstrate the reality of God, of the soul, of immortality. But he

finds that, one by one, his old arguments give way. He loses, gradually, the beliefs of his childhood. Not distinguishing between belief and faith, theology and religion, he supposes that he must give up all the faith that he cannot rigidly authenticate by the methods of science. So the universe by degrees becomes empty of all divine light and love. Instead of a God, above all, through all, and in all, he sees only blind forces, dead mechanism. Instead of Jesus as Brother, Master, Saviour, he finds in the Gospels only a few cinders which the fires of criticism have left behind. Instead of an immortal soul, he discovers only combinations of carbon and hydrogen. How lonely he is! How weak he is! What energy has man wherewith to do any great work when his faith is gone? Nothing then seems of any use. It is better to die than to live; better than both never to have been born. To this sad state many of the finest intellects of our time have come, by an honest effort to infer spirit from matter, and to evolve Deity out of the phenomena of the universe, instead of finding Him in their own soul.

Meantime I see others who are "followers of God as dear children." They trust the deep and permanent voice in their own soul, which speaks of the infinite and eternal, of the cause above all other causes, the substance below all being. They do not seek to prove God, for they know him. They trust their own healthy instincts; they do not kill their

convictions in order to dissect them. They know there is a difference between right and wrong, because they have not confused themselves by any subtle system of ethics. They believe in Christ, not because of learned books of evidences, but because he appears to them more heavenly than other human beings. He is their teacher, because he has taught them. To those who discuss the speculative questions about his deity, they say, "Whether it is proper to call him God, we do not know; but one thing we know, that whereas we were blind, now we see." He is a good shepherd, and they follow him, and find themselves fed and strengthened and helped by his guidance. That is enough.

We often overrate the power of intellect and underrate the power of character. When men speak, their character goes into their voice, and influences us inevitably and unconsciously. The voice carries the man in its tones; his courage or his doubt, his faith or unbelief, his earnestness or his wilfulness, his meanness or his generosity. To influence men for good, we must be good ourselves. Though we speak with the tongue of men and angels, if we have a hard heart within, we are nothing. This is the lesson of these "untranslatable words." When uttered, the whole soul of Christ went into them, and so they could not be translated; but neither could they be forgotten or lost. They went out in waves of influence, moving through all the centuries with their penetrating power. They wrote them-

selves, not on papyri, nor on the stone tablets of Egypt, but on the tables of the human heart. Of such influences God takes care, nor does the world willingly let them die. One age may neglect them, but in the next they renew their life. They need no mighty ark in which to float above the deluge of a sinking world; immortal as man's nature, they renew their perennial youth, and forever repeat to a weary world and broken-hearted sorrowers, "Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

VII.

THE DUTY OF BEING UNFASHIONABLE.

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LET us consider the duty of being unfashionable. I do not believe that it is always a duty to be unfashionable. Fashions may be right, as well as wrong; good, as well as bad; and when they are right and good it is a duty to be fashionable. Or a fashion may be neither good nor bad, and then it is neither a duty to be fashionable nor to be unfashionable. The early Friends, and other religious sects, opposed fashion as such; they protested against all fashion, in dress and address, — fashions of speech, fashions of costume, fashions of conduct; the fashion of taking off your hat, of using the plural pronoun, of having a coat made to fit the body. But I see nothing objectionable in wearing a fashionable dress rather than an unfashionable one, if you wish to do so, and can afford it. As a general thing it is best to conform to the customs of society when they are innocent. It is not worth while to make one's self a martyr for trifles; and it sometimes requires more courage and involves more suffering to wear an odd-looking dress than to confess the greatest

heresy in religion or politics. There is nothing which excites the public indignation more than a peculiar costume. When I first went to Europe, on arriving in England I found it quite common for men to wear shawls; so I bought a shawl, and wore it. But when I reached Switzerland it appeared to be a thing unknown, and as I walked through the streets of a Swiss village all the boys would run after me and all the girls laugh at me; so I had to lay aside my shawl. If a man in Boston should wear a turban, it would almost create a riot; but if he should wear a hat in some places in the East, he might be stoned by the rabble, for the common people are always intolerant of any singularity in dress. Therefore I think it wrong in parents to compel young people to wear dresses made in an unusual way, for they thus expose their children to needless and useless suffering. The poor little boys or girls are made objects of ridicule to their companions, and perhaps no pain experienced in after life is sharper than what children sometimes endure in this way. What a dreadful time the poor little Quaker children must have had when their fathers and mothers first sent them out into the street in their strange costume! Even now they suffer not a little. I recollect hearing of a young Quaker girl, who had it borne in upon her mind that she ought to be married in a strict Quaker dress, though her friends generally had dropped that ancient costume. She had a struggle to tell her lover of her wishes,

but was, I am glad to say, relieved by finding that he was well satisfied to have her do just as she thought right on that occasion.

But there are fashions in other things than dress, — fashions in literature, in philosophy, in art, in manners, in morals, in politics, in religion. And it may often be our duty to swim against the stream, to resist the current; in short, it may often be our duty to become unfashionable.

There are fashions in literature. In the days of Locke and Pope the fashion was plain good sense. The main thing was to be intelligible to the meanest understanding. Those two great writers were not only clear, but also strong, full, and rich in thoughts; but those who imitated them were as shallow as they were pellucid. Afterward there was a time when Thomson's Seasons and Shenstone were in fashion, and everything was pastoral and sentimental. Then came the days of Byron, and the fashion was to be melancholy and miserable; to be tired of life, and prematurely old. And if you open a magazine to-day, you will find other fashions. One man writes in the fashion of Carlyle; another in that of Emerson; one imitates Tennyson, and another Browning. But every original writer is unfashionable; he follows no fashion. He writes in his own way, not in that of any one else. In this sense, therefore, it is a duty to be unfashionable in literature. The good writer has a style of his own; he does not flow with the stream; he always

seems to be swimming against the current of commonplace; he is original in thought and expression. He is so because he is true. As men are made differently from each other, every man who really thinks, must think in his own way; and if he is true to himself he must speak in his own way, use his own language, and not that of others.

So also in art. The true artist has style, but not manner. Every one who travels in Europe and sees the paintings of the masters soon comes to know each one of them by his style. Style means originality, personality put into work. The great masters have style; their imitators have manner; that is, they follow a fashion, they imitate the external form, but the soul escapes them. It is therefore the duty of artists to be unfashionable; that is, to be themselves, to be genuine, to be sincere, simple, and true.

As truthfulness is opposed to fashion in literature and art, so it is in religion. The real objection to creeds is that they tend to insincerity. Creeds are particular fashions of thought, crystallized and made authoritative and permanent. The religious fashion of thought in the seventeenth century in England was expressed in the Assembly's Catechism. Our present fashion of thinking is wholly different; and yet many thousand churches in the United States hold to that creed, and insist that the religious faith and feeling of the nineteenth century shall be expressed in the language of the seventeenth.

Elijah the Tishbite was an unfashionable person in his time. The Israelites, wishing to be popular with their neighbors, had taken to worshipping their gods. They did not wish to be singular or puritanical; so when they were among the Phœnicians they worshipped Baal or Astarte, Just so a Unitarian now sometimes goes to the Episcopal Church and says, "O holy, blessed, and adorable Trinity!" The Jews were the Unitarians of their day, and worshipped only one God when they were at home; but they were ashamed of being so unfashionable among the Phœnicians and Canaanites, and by degrees they came to think it liberal to worship the gods of all the nations round about them. I suppose they called that "Liberal Judaism" or "Broad Judaism." But Elijah the Tishbite was of another sort. He went at once to the King of Israel, who had introduced this heathen religion, this polytheism, and denounced it as false and wrong. He defied the false gods and their prophets. He stood alone against them all, contending for the truth. Theirs was the popular and fashionable religion, his the unfashionable one. Baal had a thousand ministers; Jehovah only one, and the queen was trying to kill that one. That queen was Jezebel, and her name has become the type for all female wickedness. Yet she was only a zealous worshipper of Baal and Astarte, and I have no doubt that the priests of Baal considered her as an eminently pious woman for persecuting the

priests of Jehovah. She was like Philip of Spain, Madame de Maintenon in France, and Mary in England, who with cruel conscientiousness persecuted the Protestants. Elijah and his friends were the Protestants of Syria. They were few, and their worship was unfashionable, so they had to hide in caves to escape their persecutors.

All the great religious reforms have been unfashionable at first. Christianity was unfashionable among the Jews. Protestantism was unfashionable among the Catholics. Methodism was unfashionable in the days of Wesley. Quakerism was unfashionable in the time of George Fox. The teachers of these religions went in the heat and bitterness of their spirit; they were lonely, they were unpopular, they were the objects of hatred, contempt, ridicule. Of each it might have been said:—

> "He came, and baring his heaven-bright thought,
> He earned the base world's ban;
> And, having vainly lived and taught,
> Gave place to a meaner man."

He did not really live in vain, but he seemed to do so.

Religion, in its very nature, begins in unpopularity. It is lonely at first, living in the depths of the soul. It does not take counsel of flesh and blood; it does not know how to express itself so as to be understood. It begins in secret, in retirement and reserve. Afterward it may come out

and become a great motive-power in the world. But all the prophets of God are lonely at first, and for a time Elijah was lonely. He lived alone in the hills of Gilead; he hid in the caves of Horeb. He said to God: "Let me die; I am so lonely I cannot bear it." Then God told him there were many others he had not heard of who felt just as he did; who had not bowed the knee to Baal; and he was comforted in the thought of that invisible sympathy, that unknown brotherhood. He was compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses, though he could not see them.

How lonely Luther was during many years, — alone with his solitary convictions! He stood by himself against the whole Christian church, — against the empire, against the religion of his day and the civilization of his time. He, with nothing but truth on his side, — he could not see, he did not foresee, what a great multitude would follow him. Like all the great prophets of God, he stood alone and said, "I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen!"

Every truth is born at first in some lonely brain, — in the mind of some solitary thinker, who loves truth better than fashion, better than popularity, better than comfort, better than his own life. Elijah the Tishbite, Paul of Tarsus, Luther at Worms, John Wesley, George Fox, Swedenborg, Channing, Theodore Parker, were all willing to be unfashionable, lonely, despised, and rejected of men.

"Therefore sprang there, even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore, innumerable." The unfashionable thinker of to-day sets the fashion for the age which is to come. Let every lonely, conscientious, God-seeking soul remember this and take courage.

The Pilgrim Fathers were unfashionable people in their time. They were Protestants of the Protestants, regarded as ultraists, outsiders, and fanatics, by all the respectable people. Nothing suited them. They wished for perfect independence in the Church and State, perfect freedom of thought and life. They could find this nowhere in Europe, so they came to look for it in America. They took their wives and little ones, and came to live among the wolves and Indians rather than obey the bishops, or submit to creeds they did not believe. Half of them died the first winter. But they had faith in God. Like Abraham, they went out, not knowing whither they went, and sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange country. They were poor, hungry, and cold; they had little for the comfort of their wives and children; but they were free. They were able to worship God as they would, and to teach their children what they believed the truth. So from that little seed has come a great tree, whose branches reach to the river and its roots to the sea. From their unfashionable puritanic conscience has come this great Union

with its republican institutions; its free press, free schools, free churches, free speech; the war of independence; the war for union and freedom. All of these lay hidden in that small seed, fidelity to truth, — as the vast elm whose branches shade an acre of ground, and wave in the sunlight in grace and beauty for a hundred years, once lay in a little, delicate, winged seed, which the summer's air carried on its lightest breath. The great American Union "enthroned between its subject seas," the pillar of modern democracy, lay rooted in that little unpopular, unfashionable colony which landed on Plymouth Rock two hundred and fifty years ago,

> "Ready to faint, but bearing on
> The ark of freedom, and of God."

One of the finest figures in the "Paradise Lost" is that of Abdiel, the one angel who was not carried away in the great rebellion against God which Satan originated and organized: —

> "Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
> Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
> To swerve from truth, nor change his constant mind
> Though single. From amidst them forth he passed
> Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained,
> Unheeding."

Abdiel, this "dreadless angel," was a Puritan, who could not be moved by numerical majorities.

He was of those who say, "One man, with truth on his side, is a majority."

Of this class of men — the seed of the Puritans — New England has never been destitute. She has always had those who were willing to stand up against majorities in behalf of justice, truth, and freedom. Boston, our mother city, has never been without these independent, uncompromising men. After the massacre on the 5th of March, Josiah Quincy, Jr., the Revolutionary patriot, that soul of flame, who had been the life of the opposition to England, was asked to defend the British soldiers, and did so. That was a very unfashionable and unpopular act, and even his own father remonstrated with him for doing it; but he said, "It is my duty to defend those who come to me for counsel and aid."

His son, the next Josiah Quincy, inherited his father's spirit. As Representative from Boston in Congress, he opposed the slaveholding South and their allies at the North, and moved the impeachment of Thomas Jefferson, voting alone for his own motion.

John Quincy Adams did not represent Boston in Congress, but he was a Puritan of the Puritans. He had in him a piece of Plymouth Rock. After occupying the Presidential chair, he went back to Congress, and there stood for years defending Northern rights against Southern aggression. It was very unfashionable in those days to oppose the slave-

holders. On one memorable occasion John Quincy Adams stood alone three days, the object of abuse, and exposed to the attacks of the whole body of Southern Representatives.

"Let the single man plant himself on his instincts," says Emerson, "and the huge world will come round to him." The early Antislavery men planted themselves on their instinct of justice. They had everything else against them, — both the great political parties, both houses of Congress, the Presidents for many terms, the Supreme Court, the newspapers, the commercial community, all fashionable society, and the mob. They had nothing on their side but God and the truth; but, in the brief life of one generation they have seen all come round to them, — both political parties, President, Congress, Supreme Court. It is difficult not to go with the multitude to do evil. It is hard for a young man to stand firm against the temptations which beset him, leading him into wrong, — hard to resist the allurements of pleasure, and to stand firm on principle. A boy learns to smoke, to drink, to swear, not because he likes any of these habits, but because it is the fashion, because it is thought manly, because his companions do so. Honor to the boy brave enough to resist such allurements! The young man with a modest salary dresses expensively, drives fast horses, gambles, because it is the fashion; and, in order to meet these expenses, robs his employer, and perhaps goes to prison or

runs away. It is not because he really enjoys this fast life, but because his companions are doing these things. It is the fashion.

But remember that eccentricity is not necessarily independence. An eccentric man wastes his strength in opposing superficial fashions, — matters of no consequence. Some reformers make a great point of arguing against fashions of dress, of food, and the like, and think to save the world by eating a particular kind of bread, or by adopting some very ugly costume. There are others who attack the most firmly rooted customs of society, — directing their assaults against property, the home, marriage, wages, interest, which is very much like Don Quixote's charge against the windmill. The great arms of the mill, going steadily round and round, threw the poor knight one way and his horse the other, and continued to revolve, quite unconscious of the assault. Such has been the result of the attacks by communists and socialists on property, marriage, and religion. These institutions are not fashions which pass away, but the gradual outcome of human nature after long centuries of development.

Therefore remember that eccentricity is not always independence. The eccentric man goes out of his way in the love of singularity. He is unfashionable in things of no consequence; he is a protestant about trifles. It seems to me unwise to lay stress on ritual and ceremony, on crosses and candles, and little boys in white gowns chanting

hymns, and to think that such matters as these have anything to do with religion. But it seems to me equally unwise to attack them. They are matters of no consequence either way. If we could find out the exact kind of dress which Jesus and his apostles wore, I do not think we should be better Christians for following that fashion, or for refusing to follow it. In unimportant matters it is best to do as other people do, and be fashionable.[1]

The best illustration of the difference between eccentricity and a true independence, is to be found in the conduct and character of Jesus Christ himself. Jesus conformed in common things to common practice. There was nothing singular or eccentric in his behavior. He came eating and drinking like other people. He dressed and conversed according to the fashion of his time. He conformed to outward customs in his behavior. But inwardly he stood apart; his soul held fast by the great unchanging realities. He held to the universal religion of the human race, with which fashion had nothing to do. Christianity was no innovation; no interruption in the course of nature; not supernatural, except as all divine things are both natural and supernatural. It was the religion of universal mankind,—the truth and good in all religions brought to the highest point. I some-

[1] When a boy, I asked my Grandfather Freeman what Freemasonry was. He replied: "I think it a rather foolish thing, though not as foolish as Antimasonry."

times read long arguments written to prove that Jesus was not original, because some of the best things he said were said also by others. But Jesus did not pretend to invent truth; he did not make anything true that was not true before. He saw truth, the same truth which Abraham saw, and which many other wise and good men have seen, more or less clearly. The originality of Jesus consisted in this, — that he saw this truth so clearly and so deeply that he has made others see it too. He has filled the world full of God's truth and love. We are told that Hillel, a Jewish rabbi who lived just before Christ, also taught the golden rule. Granted; but why did mankind not hear of it when Hillel taught it? Jesus saw it clearly and uttered it plainly, and he made it a religious rule for mankind. Others, before Jesus, have taught the forgiving love of God to the sinner; but he taught it so that there is not in all Christendom an ignorant, humble, and unhappy child but knows that if he cries to God his prayer will be heard. Others have taught the great law of duty, the eternal distinction between right and wrong; but Jesus has filled the human heart so full of it that its sound has gone out to all the earth, and its word to the end of the world. Others have taught immortality; but Christian lands have been saturated with such a conviction of a future life, that those who believe in Jesus do not die, — they look through death into eternity, and see the Son of Man standing on the

right hand of the throne of God. It is true, in a very high sense, that Christianity is as old as the creation. The old Church fathers asserted that it was the original religion of mankind. Jesus makes a new heaven and a new earth by making old things young again; by renewing the primeval youth of the human mind and heart. The world journeys away from its East, and leaves behind the sunshine and the dawn,—journeys away into the mists of doubt and the weakness of unbelief. Jesus turns us back, so that we see again the glory of sunrise and the morning freshness on sea and land; and we call this a new revelation, when it is only a revival and renewal of the universal faith of our race.

The fashion of this world passes away. Everything but the deep foundations of being changes from day to day. Fashions in speech, in dress, in manners, in opinion, come and go. Creeds rise and fall; churches, ceremonies, rituals alter. The things which are seen are temporal; only the things not seen are eternal. There are some convictions which are above fashion, and which shine aloft in the heaven of human faith like stars. Sometimes mists may obscure them for a time, but they reappear in their old places, unmoved and unaltered. Such is the faith of man in God, duty, and immortality. These beliefs are untouched by any fashions of thought. Man, in every age, in all lands, has looked up, out of the finite and visible world in which

he lives, to worship something unseen and eternal. He calls his God by different names, — Zeus, Brahma, Jove, Allah, or Jehovah. But under all names and forms he worships essentially the same being, — the highest and best he knows. Placed in the midst of this immense visible universe of law and force, he is not satisfied with anything outward, but passes beyond it all, in thought and faith, to some first cause, to some supreme source, "from whom and through whom and to whom are all things." We may be sure that this faith in God is not a transient fashion, but a permanent necessity of man's soul.

VIII.

VOLUNTARY AND AUTOMATIC MORALITY;

OR, HOW PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE.

VIII.

VOLUNTARY AND AUTOMATIC MORALITY; OR, HOW PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE.

"*Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.*"

THIS seems rather hard. It seems hard that a man who has only a little should have that little taken from him; and it does not seem fair that because another man has already a great deal, more should be bestowed on him. If this were something arbitrary, it would be very unintelligible; but I think we can understand the meaning of it, and see why it is right and good, if we consider it to be a law of human nature and human society. The law is a very beneficial one, for human progress depends on it. The working of this law makes the individual better, and the world better. In fact, there could be no such thing as human civilization without it.

The law expressed in the saying is this: that when we use our powers and faculties we gain more

power and more faculty; that when we neglect to use them, they decrease, and at last perish. We cannot possess anything except by using it. If we do not use our powers they are either taken away entirely, or else cease to be of any advantage to us.

Such is the case with bodily organs, but such is still more the case with mental organs. Practice makes perfect, it is said. But notice this; it is not undirected practice, or the random use of any power, but it is the carefully arranged practice which improves it. In other words, it is practice directed *toward an end.*

If, for instance, one wishes to improve his memory, he cannot do it by endeavoring to recollect at random a variety of facts or words. He must arrange a list of what he is most apt to forget, and study this carefully till he has mastered it and fixed it firmly in his mind. Then he can go on to something else. In order to improve our powers, we must work for a definite purpose, and with a carefully arranged method.

Robert Houdin, the celebrated French juggler, tells us how he acquired one element of his power,—an extreme quickness and accuracy of observation. His father often took him through one of the boulevards of Paris, crowded with people, and led him slowly past a shop window in which were exhibited a multitude of different articles, and then made him tell how many he had been able to notice and recollect. This practice so strengthened

and quickened the perceptive powers, that at last he became able to remember every article in a large shop window by only walking past it a single time. The more he exercised the faculty, the more developed it became. The more he had of this quickness of observation, the more was given to him.

A friend of mine, President Thomas Hill, told me that when he was on the School Committee at Waltham, he endeavored to learn how far the perceptive power of the primary school children might be improved. For this end he would take a handful of beans, throw a few of them on the table, and instantly cover them with his other hand, and then ask the children how many there were under his hand. He told me that they improved until they could count them accurately up to ten or twelve during the moment that they lay uncovered on the table.

In the same way acrobats and gymnasts, by careful and systematic training, develop herculean strength of limb and power of equipoise. I have seen a man stand on one foot on a slack wire, which was swinging to and fro, and balance four or five dinner-plates on as many sticks held in his left hand. As one improves any power by careful training, he acquires more. He has much, and so more is given him.

But if we neglect to use and improve our powers, they degenerate, and at last disappear. The fishes in the Mammoth Cave have lost their eyes by not

using them, in that Egyptian darkness. So if men do not employ a power, they at last become incapable of using it. Cessation of function, from whatever cause, is invariably followed by wasting of the organ in which the function has its seat. The gland which does not secrete, diminishes in bulk; the nerve that does not transmit impressions, wastes away; the muscle which does not contract, withers. The arm of a blacksmith and the legs of a mountaineer enlarge; but the arms of the Hindoo devotee, which are held in the same position for years, not allowed to move, shrink and shrivel in size and force.

The intellectual and moral organs, like the physical, are liable to atrophy when not exercised. If a person does not take pains to observe, and to remember what he observes, the power of observing and remembering gradually decays. He who does not think seriously on any subject will become frivolous, and not be able to apply his mind at all. Those unfortunate young people who are not obliged to work for a living, and who do not work from a sense of duty, are at last unable to take hold of any serious enterprise. They lose the power of work, and spend their days in idleness, and have none of that divine joy which comes from the sense of accomplishment. They can never say, "I have finished that piece of work!" The most unhappy people I have known were those who had nothing to do. It is a fortunate thing for most of us that

we are *obliged* to work, and so acquire the discipline, the education, and the content which result from doing with our might what our hand finds to do.

To him who hath knowledge, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance. Knowledge in the mind is such a vital and vitalizing power that it makes the intellect active to see, to learn, to remember. The first foreign language we learn is difficult; the second is easier; the third is acquired with still greater facility. If we study the history of one nation, or one epoch, we find ourselves attracted to another and another. The person who has studied botany finds new plants wherever he goes. He who travels with an empty, untaught mind, comes back nearly as ignorant as he went; but the geologist, the artist, the man who has read geography and history, or who knows well any industry or manufacture or art, is able to see something new wherever he goes. Just as the merchant must send out some freight in his vessel in order to bring back a cargo, the traveller must take some knowledge with him abroad if he wishes to bring any home.

We have heard of persons who have stayed in the house and avoided society until it became impossible for them to leave their home or their room. We owe something to society; we can be of use to others by our kindly, cheerful companionship; but these people had buried their talent in

the earth, until at last it was taken from them. Solitary confinement, when inflicted as a punishment, is considered a very severe one; but such persons inflict it on themselves, — living for years alone, and at last unable to go out, even if they wish to do so.

So people who do not *give*, lose at last the power of giving. I have known rich men who were absolutely unable to give, because they had not kept up the habit of regular and continued generosity. The only way to escape that malady — for it is a real disease — is to give away, regularly and on principle, a certain proportion of one's income. And this law applies to all, — to those in moderate circumstances no less than to the wealthy. It was the man who had only *a single talent* who hid it in the earth, not the one who had five. If you do not give now, when your means are small, what reason have you to think that you would do better if you were wealthy? If every poor man in Boston gave according to his means, all the charities of the city would be amply supplied. Let us never forget the epitaph on a tombstone, which teaches the true law on this subject: "What I spent, I had; what I kept, I lost; what I gave, I have still."

So, likewise, those who do not care to see the truth, lose at last the power of seeing it. I have known lawyers, to whom justice and truth were supreme; honorable, high-minded men, who never condescended to any low cunning, but used argu-

ments which were convincing to themselves in order to convince others. The bar of this city has always had such lawyers, — men whose wish and effort it was "to execute justice and to maintain truth." Such men, as they grow older, grow wiser, stronger, greater. They love truth, and truth is given to them, and they have abundance.

But I have known others, members of this same grand profession, whose only object was to win their cause, and that in any way. They said, not what they believed true, but what they thought they might make *seem* true to others. Their object was not to convince; but to deceive, to confuse, to bewilder; to mislead, to win their cause by appeals to prejudice, to ignorance, to passion. And so at last they confused their own sense, and lost the power of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. They had buried their talent in the earth, and it was taken from them.

Truth is such a sacred thing, so holy, so venerable, that we must not trifle with it. In public speech and in private conversation some persons talk for effect, regardless of accuracy. They say what will produce an impression, assert extraordinary facts, aim at excitement, and at last *lie* unconsciously and automatically. They are called *liars;* but it is a disease, not a wilful purpose. They do not know, at the time, that they are saying what is not true. Such is the evil which results from talking merely for effect, merely to produce an impression.

Truth-telling becomes a habit, and at last the man cannot help telling the truth. So untruth-telling becomes also a habit, and the man cannot help lying. Profanity becomes a habit. The child of God, made by him for immortality, and blessed every day by his goodness, living and moving and having his being in God, goes about from morning till night blaspheming the name of his protector and friend, calling down damnation on himself, and profaning everything sacred with oaths and curses. And perhaps all the time he does not know that he is doing so. This habit has become automatic and unconscious. He has deadened in his soul all sense of the reality of spiritual things, until they have become empty names, with which he fills up the gaps in his speech while he is trying to think of something to say.

We may state the law thus: "Any habitual course of conduct changes voluntary actions into automatic or involuntary actions." This can be illustrated by the physical constitution of man. Some of our bodily acts are voluntary, some involuntary; some partly one and partly the other. The heart beats seventy or eighty times a minute all our life long, without any will of ours. Whether we are asleep or awake, the heart drives the blood, by its steadily moving piston, through all the arteries and veins, more than a hundred thousand times every twenty-four hours. The heart beats thirty-six million times every year, without

any will of ours; and if it suspends or relaxes its action for a few moments, we faint away and become unconscious. If it stops its action for a minute, we die. The lungs, in the same way, perpetually inhale and exhale breath, whether we intend it or not; and if the lungs should suspend their action, we should die. But we can exercise *a little* volition over the action of the lungs; we can breathe voluntarily, taking long breaths. Thus the action of the lungs is partly automatic and partly voluntary, while the mechanical action of the heart is wholly automatic, and the chemical action of the digestive organs is the same. But some acts, voluntary at first, become by habit automatic. A child, beginning to walk, takes every single step by a separate act of will; beginning to read, he looks at every single letter. After a while, he walks and reads by a habit, which has become involuntary. He does not exercise a separate act of will in taking each step or looking at each letter. He walks and reads unconscious of the separate steps in the process.

So, also, it is with man's moral and spiritual nature. By practice he forms habits, and habitual action is automatic action, requiring no exercise of will except at the beginning of the series of acts. The law of association does the rest.

So to him who hath shall be given. As voluntary acts are transformed into automatic, the will is set free to devote itself to higher efforts and larger

attainments. After telling the truth awhile by an effort, we tell the truth naturally, necessarily, automatically. After giving to good objects for a while from principle, we give as a matter of course. Honesty becomes automatic; self-control becomes automatic. We rule over our spirit, repress ill-temper, keep down bad feelings, first by an effort, afterwards as a matter of course. Temperance becomes automatic; it costs a good deal of effort and self-denial at first, but at last it takes care of itself.

Possibly these virtues really become incarnate in the bodily organization. Possibly goodness is made flesh and becomes consolidate in the fibres of the brain. Vices, beginning in the soul, seem to become at last bodily diseases; why may not virtues follow the same law? One purpose of the body may be thus to receive and retain the results of past effort, that spiritual acts may be anchored and accumulated by physical organization. Thus the body may be the best servant of the soul, packing away and watching like a faithful steward all its master's treasures, and in the future life the risen or spiritual body may retain them all.

If it were not for some such law of accumulation as this, the work of life would have to be begun forever anew. Formation of character would be impossible. We should be incapable of progress, our whole strength being always employed in battling with our first enemies, learning evermore anew

our earliest lessons. But, by our present constitution, he who has taken one step can take another, and life may become a perpetual advance from good to better.

This is the one and sufficient reward of all virtue, the one sufficient punishment of all wrong-doing, that right actions and wrong actions gradually harden into character. The reward of the good man is, that having chosen truth and pursued it, it becomes at last a part of his own nature, a happy companion of all his life. The condemnation of the bad man is, that when light has come into the world he has chosen darkness, and so the light within him becomes darkness. Do not envy the bad man's triumphs and worldly successes. Every one of them is a rivet fastening him to evil, making it more difficult for him to return to good; making it impossible but for the redeeming power of God, which has become incarnate in Christ, in order to seek and save the lost.

The highest graces of all — Faith, Hope, and Love — obey the same law. By trusting in God when we see him ever so faintly, we come at last to realize, as by another sense, his divine presence in all things. By praying to him when we can only say, "O God! — if there be a God — save my soul — if I have a soul," we at last learn to talk with this Heavenly Friend just as we would with an earthly friend. As, on a summer's day, when we sit among the pines, though we do not see the wind, nor know

whence it cometh or whither it goeth, we yet hear its silvery voice above our heads, and feel its cool breath kissing our cheek; so, though we do not know how God answers prayer, we have the sense of strength, of content, of kindly purpose, of love, joy, and peace, making our whole life useful to others and satisfactory to ourselves. Faith in God, at first an effort, at last becomes automatic and instinctive.

Thus, too, faith in immortality solidifies into an instinct. As we live from and for infinite, divine, eternal realities, these become a part of our knowledge. Socrates did not convince himself of his immortality by his arguments; but by spending a long life in intimate converse with the highest truths and noblest ends, he at last reached the point where he could not help believing in immortality. As the pure in heart see God, so the pure in heart also see immortality. Death fades away and becomes nothing; it is unthinkable, impossible. "He who believes in me," said Jesus, "cannot die." He who enters into his thoughts, sympathizes with his purposes, partakes of his spirit, knows that death is nothing. Thus it is that Christ abolishes death. The true resurrection is rising with Christ to a higher life; as the Apostle says, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above."

The moral of all this is evident. Every man, every woman, every child has some talent, some

power, some opportunity of getting good and doing good. Each day offers some occasion for using this talent. As we use it, it gradually increases, improves, becomes native to the character. As we neglect it, it dwindles, withers, and disappears. This is the stern but benign law by which we live. This makes character real and enduring; this makes progress possible; this turns men into angels and virtue into goodness. And thus, at last,

> "Love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security."

IX.

TRUE AND FALSE MANLINESS.

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MANLINESS means perfect manhood, as womanliness implies perfect womanhood. Manliness is the character of a man as he ought to be, as he was meant to be. It expresses the qualities which go to make a perfect man, — truth, courage, conscience, freedom, energy, self-possession, self-control. But it does not exclude gentleness, tenderness, compassion, modesty. A man is not less manly, but more so, because he is gentle. In fact, our word "gentleman" shows that a typical man must also be a gentle man.

By manly qualities the world is carried forward. The manly spirit shows itself in enterprise, the love of meeting difficulties and overcoming them, — the resolution which will not yield, which patiently perseveres, and does not admit the possibility of defeat. It enjoys hard toil, rejoices in stern labor, is ready to make sacrifices, to suffer and bear disaster patiently. It is generous, giving itself to a good cause not its own ; it is public-spirited, devoting

itself to the general good with no expectation of reward. It is ready to defend unpopular truth, to stand by those who are wronged, to uphold the weak. Having resolved, it does not go back, but holds on, through good report and evil, sure that the right must win at last. And so it causes truth to prevail, and keeps up the standard of a noble purpose in the world.

But as most good things have their counterfeits, so there is false manliness which imitates these great qualities, though at heart it is without them. Instead of strength of will, it is only wilful; in place of courage, it has audacity. True manliness does what it believes right; false manliness, what it chooses to do. Freedom, to one, means following his own convictions of truth; to the other it means thinking as he pleases, and doing as he likes. The one is reverent, the other rude; one is courteous, the other overbearing; one is brave, the other foolhardy; one is modest, the other self-asserting. False manliness is cynical, contemptuous, and tyrannical to inferiors. The true has respect for all men, is tender to the sufferer, is modest and kind. The good type uses its strength to maintain good customs, to improve the social condition, to defend order. The other imagines it to be manly to defy law, to be independent of the opinions of the wise, to sneer at moral obligation, to consider itself superior to the established principles of mankind.

A false notion of manliness leads boys astray.

All boys wish to be manly; but they often try to become so by copying the vices of men rather than their virtues. They see men drinking, smoking, swearing; so these poor little fellows sedulously imitate such bad habits, thinking they are making themselves more like men. They mistake rudeness for strength, disrespect to parents for independence. They read wretched stories about boy brigands and boy detectives, and fancy themselves heroes when they break the laws, and become troublesome and mischievous. Out of such false influences the criminal classes are recruited. Many a little boy who only wishes to be manly, becomes corrupted and debased by the bad examples around him and the bad literature which he reads. The cure for this is to give him good books, show him truly noble examples from life and history, and make him understand how infinitely above this mock-manliness is the true courage which ennobles human nature.

In a recent awful disaster, amid the blackness and darkness and tempest, the implacable sea and the pitiless storm, — when men's hearts were failing them from terror, and women and children had no support but faith in a Divine Providence and a coming immortality, — the dreadful scene was illuminated by the courage and manly devotion of those who risked their own lives to save the lives of others. Such heroism is like a sunbeam breaking through the tempest. It shows us the real worth there is in man. No matter how selfish mankind

may seem, whenever hours like these come, which try men's souls, they show that the age of chivalry has not gone; that though

"The knights are dust, and their good swords rust,"

there are as high-hearted heroes now as ever. Firemen rush into a flaming house to save women and children. Sailors take their lives in their hands to rescue their fellow-men from a wreck. They save them at this great risk, not because they are friends or relatives, but because they are fellow-men.

Courage is an element of manliness. It is more than readiness to encounter danger and death, for we are not often called to meet such perils. It is every-day courage which is most needed,—that which shrinks from no duty because it is difficult; which makes one ready to say what he believes, when his opinions are unpopular; which does not allow him to postpone a duty, but makes him ready to encounter it at once; a courage which is not afraid of ridicule when one believes himself right; which is not the slave of custom, the fool of fashion. Such courage as this, in man or woman or child, is true manliness. It is infinitely becoming in all persons. It does not seek display, it is often the courage of silence no less than speech; it is modest courage, unpretending though resolute. It holds fast to its convictions and principles, whether men hear or whether they forbear.

Truthfulness is another element of true manliness.

Lies usually come from cowardice, because men are afraid of standing by their flag, because they shrink from opposition, or because they are conscious of something wrong which they cannot defend, and so conceal. Secret faults, secret purposes, habits of conduct of which we are ashamed, lead to falsehood, and falsehood is cowardice. And thus the sinner is almost necessarily a coward. He shrinks from the light; he hides himself in darkness. Therefore if we wish to be manly, we must not do anything of which we are ashamed. He who lives by firm principles of truth and right, who deceives no one, injures no one, who therefore has nothing to hide, he alone is manly. The bad man may be audacious, but he has no true courage. His manliness is only a pretence, an empty shell, a bold demeanor, with no real firmness behind it.

True manliness is humane. It says, "We who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." Its work is to protect those who cannot defend themselves; to stand between the tyrant and the slave, the oppressor and his victim. It is identical in all times with the spirit of chivalry which led the good knights to wander in search of robbers, giants, and tyrannical lords, those who oppressed the poor and robbed helpless women and orphans of their rights. There are no tyrant barons now, but the spirit of tyranny and cruelty is still to be found. The good knight to-day is he who provides help for the blind, the deaf and dumb,

the insane; who defends animals from being cruelly treated, rescues little children from bad usage, and seeks to give working men and women their rights. He protects all these sufferers from that false manliness which is brutal and tyrannical to the weak, abusing its power over women and children and domestic animals. The true knights to-day are those who organize and carry on the societies to prevent cruelty, or to enforce the laws against those who for a little gain make men drunkards. The giants and dragons to-day are those cruelties and brutalities which use their power to ill-treat those who are at their mercy.

True manliness is tender and loving; false manliness, cold and hard, cynical and contemptuous. The bravest and most heroic souls are usually the most loving. Garibaldi, Kossuth, Mazzini, the heroes of our times; Luther, who never feared the face of man; Gustavus Adolphus and William of Orange, are examples of this union of courage and tenderness. Bold as lions in the defence of the right, such men in their homes and their private life have a womanly gentleness. False manliness is unfeeling, with no kindly sympathies, rude and rough and overbearing. True manliness is temperate; it is moderate, it exercises self-control, it is capable of self-denial and renunciation. False manliness is self-willed and self-indulgent.

The danger which besets those who have strong wills is to be self-willed. If they confound this

self-will with manly force and persistency, with self-dependence and self-reliance, they are apt to become overbearing, self-indulgent, and intemperate. Then they lose the power of self-control, and this results not in strength, but weakness. He who cannot rule his own spirit, govern his desires, restrain his appetites, is no longer master, but slave. He is the slave of circumstances, of temptation. He cannot do the thing he would.

Shakspeare, with his inimitable knowledge of human nature, has given us the process by which this pure will, not subject to law, passes finally into mere appetite. He makes Ulysses tell how order, rule, and place make the harmony of the world; how the very heavens observe degree and priority, "proportion and office in the line of order." He says that if this respect for order, degree, and law should cease in society, mere force would become supreme: —

> "Strength should be lord of imbecility,
> And the rude son should strike the father dead:
> Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,
> Between whose endless jar justice resides,
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, a universal wolf,
> Must make perforce a universal prey,
> And, last, eat up himself."

The English, a noble nation, have been gifted with an immense strength of will. By this the

people of that little island have been able to grow into a first-class power, and conquer vast regions of the world. Fortunately this nation has also a sense of justice, and thus its sway of foreign lands and subject races has been commonly beneficent. But the danger of the English is to worship power in itself, and then they relapse into Paganism. We see this tendency to a Pagan worship of mere will in many ways. We find it cropping out in English history. Let a subject race rebel, and the English become, like the Romans, relentless, merciless. They do not inquire into the oppression which has caused the rebellion, but the nation goes into a sort of blind rage for putting down the people who have dared to resist the authority of England. So it was in our American Revolution, so in India, in Jamaica, in Abyssinia, in South Africa. The English have had wise and just statesmen, who, like Chatham, Gladstone, John Bright, have erected justice above power; and these men are the real salvation of England. We also see this tendency to admire mere will in English literature, — in the novels where the hero is a man of prodigious force, which he exerts in a reckless way; in books like Ruskin's, in which his own private opinion stands in the place of reason and argument. Especially we see it in the downward course of Carlyle's mind. Carlyle, in his early writings, set forth a religion of justice, and proclaimed the divinity of truth. He made goodness seem the only reality.

Then his influence was a blessed one. But he went on insensibly to substitute sincerity in the place of truth, as his ideal. He asserted that to be sincere was to be right. Next, this worship of sincerity became a worship of self-reliance, and that, again, became a worship of will, and at last he gave us as his ideal Frederick the Great, — a man with no sense of justice, who was a striking example of a self-will which defied man and God. This downward course of Carlyle's thought was marked by a like deterioration of his character. He became moody, overbearing, and tyrannical; wretched himself, he made those about him wretched.

The course of Emerson's mind was in the opposite direction. He began by laying too much stress, perhaps, on pure self-reliance. But he passed up steadily into the region where justice, law, love, purity, and truth are the Olympian powers. He passed from the "Initial" to the "Celestial" love; to that which has

> "heartily designed
> The benefit of broad mankind."

True manliness differs also from the false in its attitude to woman. Its knightly feeling makes it wish to defend her rights, to maintain her claims, to be her protector and advocate. False manliness wishes to show its superiority by treating women as inferiors. It flatters them, but it does not

respect them. It fears their competition on equal levels, and wishes to keep them confined, not within walls, as in the Mohammedan regions, but behind the more subtle barriers of opinion, prejudice, and supposed feminine aptitudes. True manliness holds out the hand to woman, and says, "Do whatever you are able to do; whatever God meant you to do. Neither you nor I can tell what that is till all artificial barriers are removed, and you have full opportunity to try." Manly strength respects womanly purity, sympathy, and grace of heart. And this is the real chivalry of the present hour.

Finally, true manliness draws its strength from religion. It looks up to whatever things are good, true, and excellent. It reverences the divine element in all earthly phenomena. Seeing an infinite grandeur manifested in the lowest and most minute works of the creative power, it reverences God as the all in all. False manliness imagines that it shows its superiority by irreverence, by turning sacred things into jest; by looking with contempt on the great faiths of mankind. But unless we have faith in something above ourselves, our strength goes out of us. Doubt and unbelief may be sometimes unavoidable, may not be in any sense blamable, but they always take away our strength. Our power comes from a boundless faith and hope; from a conviction that amid these changes of time there is something unchangeable and eternal. Sur-

rounded by death and decay, we need to rely on the incorruptible and immortal essences of being. Reverence for a divine presence in the soul and in nature is the support of true manliness. According to Paul, Jesus is the example of a perfect man. Paul knew what manliness was; his own life was a long battle, a knightly conflict, full of courage, endurance, independence, freedom, devotion to all things good. No opposition could daunt him, no power turn him from his chosen path. But when he wrote from his prison to the Ephesians, instead of boasting of his own achievements, he puts himself by the side of his readers as one who is still endeavoring to grow up into the perfect manliness of Christ.

Jesus was the perfect man because always drawing power from on high, and devoting that power to the good of his fellow-men. The harmony of his soul was so entire, that separate qualities are scarcely seen. We do not often speak of Jesus as a philanthropist, a reformer, a thinker, a prophet, a saint; but rather as the balanced fulness of all human powers; never hurrying, never resting; always about his Father's business, friendly with the lowliest, one to whom all men were equally dear. We do not think of making any analysis of his character. It is the unity and harmony of all traits which impress us. It is this which constitutes his great influence, — that he was always one with God and one with man.

We therefore find Jesus to be both master and brother, teacher and friend, because when in communion with his spirit we also grow up in all things into a truer manliness. It is a great blessing to have such a friend, whom not having seen we yet can love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

X.

THE RUDDER, COMPASS, CHART, AND SAILS IN MAN.

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EVERY part of a vessel is curious and admirable. Among the works of men, this is one of those which most nearly approaches a work of nature, and seems almost alive. A ship is partly copied from a fish, — adapted by its form, like that of a fish, to cut through the water with the smallest resistance. It is also partly copied from a bird; its sails, like the wings of a bird, are filled with air, and give motion to the body. In a ship every part must be in symmetrical relation to every other part; every spar, block, rope, cable, anchor, capstan, must be exactly proportioned to each other; and so a ship becomes a work of art. From these harmonious proportions, imposed by the stern law of necessity, emerges beauty. Make a thing perfectly useful, exactly adapted to its object, neither too much nor too little, and it becomes a work of art. Let the object be a high and difficult one, and it becomes high art and beautiful art. Perfect utility appears

identical with perfect beauty. The men who built ships never thought of beauty: they thought of use; but beauty came of itself with the use.

But, curious as is every part of a vessel to a landsman, the most curious is the steering apparatus. There is a very small helm, almost out of sight, bearing no seeming relation in size to the vessel itself; but a slight change in its direction alters the vessel's course. This appears almost unaccountable. That by means of its helm a ship can be made to sail nearly against the wind, to go about, to lie to, to obey with the docility of an intelligent creature, is truly wonderful. This enormous mass, plunging on through the water, can, by a single touch of the hand on the wheel, be made to go to the right or left, and so can be directed from Boston harbor all the way to China. The rudder of a vessel was a wonderful discovery. To be sure, all that it does is to turn the ship either to the right or to the left; but that power is enough to enable the commander to direct it as he will, in spite of storms or calms, of ocean currents, of fogs, sunken rocks, iron-bound coasts; moving by night and by day, and going round the world to the port determined on by the merchant in his counting-room in Boston.

Man also has in him a rudder, by which to steer at every moment. As the ship's helm is the most mysterious part of its construction, so the rudder in man is the most inexplicable part of his organization. It is the function of free choice. It consists

simply in the power, at every moment, of turning to the right or left, of choosing this or that, of doing or not doing, saying yes or no, resolving or declining to resolve. Man is not free to be anything he chooses, or do anything he pleases. He is limited by stern laws,—laws of organization, laws of circumstance. A man born in Africa must be an African, with African character, with African education; he cannot be a Frenchman or a New Englander. It was by no choice of mine that I was born when I was and where I was. It was by no merit or fault of mine that I have such an organization of mind and body, and no other. Human freedom does not give a man the power of changing his nature; but, being what he is, it gives the power of choosing his aim, and going toward it, under the limitation of these foreordained conditions.

In steering a ship it is not enough to have a rudder; we must have something by which to steer; we must know the direction. On land, the fixed objects around show us which way we are going; but at sea, where all is in apparent motion, we must have something fixed by which to direct our course. The sun by day and the stars by night meet this need; but in cloudy weather and stormy days sun and stars are hidden. Hence extended navigation became only possible when the compass needle was discovered. Like other great discoveries, no one knows precisely when or by whom it came. The need created the invention. Now, by help of

the little needle in its hanging box, always trembling toward the north by its mysterious inward attraction, we can cross oceans without sight of sun or stars, and always know which way we are going.

In man, too, there is a similar means of knowing his direction at every moment. The compass in man we call conscience. It always points toward the right. The right is the North star of conscience. Conscience says, "You are doing right," "You are doing wrong." It does not, indeed, tell us what is right, or what wrong; but it tells us something is right, and something wrong. It performs a double office; first, it gives us the great ideas of right and wrong, — duty, obligation; and then it approves when we do what we believe to be right; disapproves when we do what we believe to be wrong. It is sometimes objected that if there were such a moral sense in man all men would agree as to what is right and wrong; whereas it is certain that men differ. This objection is valid against the idea that conscience is a code of ethics. It is not. It guides us according to the code we have. But it is the check and restraint on the selfish passions, the selfish will, the personal ambitions. It points forever to a great commanding law above man's egotistical desires, and so lifts us above ourselves. It says, "No matter what you wish, what you desire, there is something which you ought to do." Thus it emancipates man from the dominion of mere selfish desire. Conscience gives us

warning if we are going wrong. When the sun and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after rain; when we cannot see God clearly; when the great intuitions of the soul are clouded over, this inward monitor still continues its faithful, humble task. It says to us, "This is right." It says, "This is wrong." If we attend to its warning we shall hardly ever go astray. We can sophisticate it if we choose; we can reason ourselves into the belief that black is white and white black; we can put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. But in the depths of the soul, when we are quiet, and listen to the still small voice, it will warn us of our danger, and lead us back to the truth and right. We can refuse to attend to it, just as the mariner may neglect to look at his compass; but the compass is there, waiting to be looked at, and conscience is there, waiting to be listened to.

In steering a ship, besides the rudder and compass, we must also have a chart. We must have a chart of the ocean and of its shores, so as to know in what direction to steer, to know the shoals and currents, the soundings off the coasts, the hidden reefs and rocks, the harbors and their bearings. The compass does not tell us all this; this we learn from the chart. The compass only tells us which way is north, and which way south. If we had the compass and rudder, but no chart, we would not undertake a voyage.

Man also needs a chart to tell him which way to steer, what he ought to do and to be. God has given him this chart in his reason, — the light which lightens every man who cometh into the world. When we are quiet, and listen to its voice, it teaches us. We are often too busy to listen to it, too much immersed in daily cares and anxieties to stop and hear it. So we need other teachers, outward guides to lead us.

This is why prophets and teachers are necessary to man. His freedom and his conscience are not enough. They do not inform him of his duties, his dangers, his hopes. They do not show him the object of life, the needs of the soul, the purposes of God concerning it. The Bible is the record of the revelations made to such teachers. The Bible is not the rudder; the rudder is freedom. It is not the compass; the compass is conscience. But it is the chart, it is the map; it is to be consulted every day in order to show us what there is around us, and what before us, in time and in eternity. Because the sailor has a rudder and a compass; because he has the sight of the glorious sun and the unchanging stars; because he has scientific instruments by which he can take observations of the heavenly bodies to find his latitude and longitude; because he carries a chronometer to give him the true time at Greenwich, can he therefore do without his charts? No; these are necessary as well as the others. Both are necessary; he cannot dispense

with either. So, because we have in us noble instincts and great powers, because we have achieved great advances in science, does it follow that we can dispense with the intuitions of past prophets, the wisdom of sages, and the inspired lives of apostles? No!

It is easy to point out the errors in the Bible. It is not infallible; no human thing is infallible, and the Bible is intensely human. Therein is its power. Your friend, noble and generous, the man you love the most, whose life brings you comfort, warning, strength, courage, on whom you lean every day, to whom you go for advice and sympathy, — he is not infallible; he may make mistakes. But will you give him up on that account, sneer at him, ridicule him? Moses made mistakes, in geology and astronomy, — the mistakes of his time; for God did not send him to teach astronomy or geology. But Moses said: "There is one God," when men worshipped a thousand gods. He said: "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not even covet thy neighbor's goods; thou shalt be hospitable to the stranger; thou shalt be kind to thy cattle." And by these commands he lifted man to a higher plane of being. It is very easy for a man living in the nineteenth century to point out the mistakes of Moses in matters of science. Any school-girl in Boston can correct the mistakes of Plato, Bacon, and Shakspeare. But Shakspeare, Plato, and Bacon are still great lights to us, as they were to their own day. So

the Bible continues to be our guide and inspiration in morals and religion, as it has been for three thousand years. We can find nothing tenderer than the Psalms. In our sorrow and loss we borrow the language of David; in our loftier moods we turn to the prophets; in our bereavement we come to him who said, "I will give you rest." In our sins we find no one who can bring to us the sense of God's pardon as it is given through Jesus Christ. Let the mousing critic gnaw at the letter of the Bible; the honest and seeking soul will ever find in it treasures of comfort and of light.

The great utterances born in the highest moments of life, born out of the deepest experiences of heroes, saints, and martyrs, the lofty moral teachings which have come from pure souls, — these enter into our common life, and lift us up to a higher plane of conviction. Why is it that every man's standard of right is higher than his conduct, higher than his habits of thinking, feeling, and acting? We all have a standard of duty higher than anything we have yet attained. How did we get it? It is a divine gift, coming down to us from higher life and purer thoughts than our own. These cold, pure waters of life flow down from the uplands, from the mountains, and refresh the lower valleys with their crystal drops. But we all have something in us which answers to such words. When those high chords are struck, some string vibrates in unison in every bosom. Even the com-

mon crowd in a theatre will instinctively applaud every noble, generous sentiment uttered on the stage, showing that man never loses his sense of what is right and good.

Man's tendency is to rise. Aspiration belongs to human nature. Even Milton's devils had not lost their aspiration, their tendency upward. They said to each other in hell: —

> "By our proper motion we ascend
> Up to our native heights. Descent and fall
> To us is adverse."

Man is never satisfied when he is not making progress. He tries to seem satisfied, to persuade himself that he is satisfied, but he is not. We all long to be better than we are, and that is the proof that God means to make us better. When God made us he made us for himself, and he will not allow any of us to fail of accomplishing his purpose.

One more comparison must be made between man and the vessel. Even the rudder and compass and charts are of no use unless something else is added. What is that something else? A motive power. The vessel spreads its sails to the wind, and the wind fills the sails. The sailor cannot create the wind; all he can do is to spread his sail to it. He cannot tell beforehand which way the wind will blow, but he goes out of the port in confidence that the wind will be sent to him.

There is also a power from above man which moves man. We do not move ourselves. We are moved by the spirit of God. What is prayer but spreading our sails to catch the wind? Man does not create the wind. He does not know whence it cometh or whither it goeth. He simply raises his sails and is driven by it.

A religious man is one who believes in a power above himself, which can add motive to his life, and who therefore spreads his sails to catch that divine breeze. When I am sad, I raise the sails of prayer to catch a breeze of comfort; when I am weak, I spread the sails of faith to receive the wind which shall bear me on; when I am sinful, I lift my sails to welcome the pardoning breath of God's love. Amid the sorrows and disappointments of time I open my heart to my heavenly friend and am comforted. Strange that men should believe in the invisible wind, and not in the unseen breath of God's love.

Or, let us change the image, and suppose the ship to be, not a sailing vessel, but a great sea-going steamer, with a raging, fiery furnace in its heart, which beats with steady pulsation day and night, like the heart of a man, driving the great piston up and down, and moving the enormous shafts of steel, which turn with steady force the great wheels. The ship plunges on through the breaking waves, driven by this inward fire. It is now not wind which moves it, but fire.

The steamer is an advance on the sailing vessel. And so the man in whose soul God kindles a fire of love, which burns on night and day, and moves him against tide and storm, is no doubt an advance on the man who can pray indeed occasionally for help, but has no constant fire of love in his heart. God comes in the inward fire no less than in the outward wind. He sends us motives from within as from above. We use occasional prayers, but God teaches us to pray without ceasing by a constant life of love to him and his creatures. Then we feel God near us all the day. Then we do not hoist our sails and take them in again, but we are driven forward by the steady, undying love of God in our hearts.

By this I mean that if we are inwardly at peace with God, full of his love, and steadfastly doing his will, it is not necessary to pray merely as a duty, or a form, or a custom. We do not pray to God in order to please him, but to be helped and blessed. Just as the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, so prayer was made for man, and not man for prayer. Prayer is not a duty, but a privilege, an opportunity. It is food when we are hungry, water when we are thirsty. When we are not hungry it is not our duty to eat, nor to drink when we have no thirst. Never look on prayer as a form which you ought to go through with, never as a ceremony by which God is pleased and pacified. No, it is the happy talk of a child

with its mother; the cry for comfort, and love, and help, which, if it be only sincere, God will always answer. But does God answer the prayer of form?

By this illustration of a ship we see in what human power consists, and what are its limitations. The sailor has no power over the vessel to make it different from what it is; he has no power over the currents or the winds to make them different from what they are; he has no power over the geography of land or sea to make it different. But he can study his chart to find out how to sail, he can steer his vessel by his compass according to its course, he can set his sails to the wind; and if he does all this aright, he is able, by obeying law, to become free. He is free to accomplish his work only as he continues to obey divine law.

Nor has man any power over his organization of mind or of body to make them different from what they are; no power over the circumstances in which he is placed. But he can obey the laws of God, or disobey them; he can seek for truth, or neglect it. Happy is he who is steering somewhere, who is not drifting purposeless through life. The most unhappy of men are those who have nothing to do.

Happier he whose purpose is a good and generous one; who lives in order to find more truth, do more good, accomplish something of real value in the world. Happiest of all he who is doing this with the consciousness that he is a fellow-worker with God,

who is working with the love of God and Christ in his heart, and so making this earthly life at one with the life in heaven. He only can pray the Lord's prayer with full conviction, and say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." He knows what is the object of his voyage; he has the chart of his Master's life by which to steer, the unvarying compass of conscience as his daily guide, and the spirit of God, the divine breath of love, to urge him forward.

Over ten thousand miles of pathless ocean
  The ship moves on its steadfast course each day,
Through tropic calms, or seas in wild commotion,
  And anchors safe within the expected bay.

O ship of God! with voyage more sublime—
  O human soul! in thine appointed hour,
Launched from eternity on seas of time,
  In calms more fatal, storms of madder power—

Sail on! and trust the compass in thy breast,
  Trust the diviner heavens that round thee bend,
And, steering for the port of perfect rest,
  Trust, most of all, in thine Eternal Friend.

XI.

MORAL MISALLIANCES.

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"The thistle in Lebanon sent to the cedar in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son for a wife."

THIS is one of the earliest instances of what we call a fable. Fables, like proverbs, are the exponents of a popular wisdom. The good sense of a nation and age sums itself up in such a little parable as this. It is meant to show the disadvantages of a misalliance. It has the same moral as the fable of Æsop concerning the collier who asked the fuller to come and live with him. Inconsistent unions and their evils are objected to here.

In nature, however, there cannot be any such inconsistent unions. The thistle and cedar never marry. Tribes, orders, genera, species, are preserved from intermingling by some fixed law. We do not exactly know what a species is, but we know at least this, that there are boundaries in the animal and vegetable kingdoms which cannot now be over-

passed. This law keeps races distinct, and prevents intermixture. There are no hybrid races. If there were, the whole organized world would be a scene of confusion. The peach tree and almond breed together, but are held therefore to be of the same species, the peach being only a variety of the almond. "If the peach were, indeed, a distinct species, where was it concealed," says Pritchard, "from the creation until the reign of Claudius Cæsar?"

The old botanists arranged plants according to an artificial order, founded on one or two features of their organization, making a very cumbrous system, hard to understand and difficult to remember. The modern botanists have a natural method of arrangement, by which plants come together that are really alike; not those which resemble each other only in such a number of stamens and pistils. Society in America has the advantage over society in Europe that it follows the natural order of arrangement. The system of elective affinities prevails so powerfully that no caste system can succeed here. It may be attempted in such great cities as New York and Philadelphia, but the whole stress of things is against it.

Nature forbids misalliances by establishing the boundary of specific differences between different tribes of animals and plants. Thus we have variety, but not confusion, in the world; thousands of animals, thousands of plants, keeping themselves distinct, capable of being improved, but remaining

essentially the same, — the violet always a violet, the bee just such an insect now, with the same habits and instincts, as when Samson propounded his riddle to the Philistines. If the vegetable and animal kingdoms had been constituted differently, the result would have been worse. We should have had confusion instead of harmony. We must must have varieties first, then we can have union.

"All Nature's difference makes all Nature's peace."

Social man has attempted to imitate these arrangements of nature by means of a system of caste. This has been carried to the greatest extreme in India. Gangooly tells us there are thirty-four castes in India, and no man can get out of his caste by any effort. A weaver can no more change into a barber or shoemaker than a dog can change into an elephant, or an apple tree into a maple.

The same distinction of castes appears in western society. There are high and low castes, Brahmins and Sudras, in Europe. These distinctions are more marked and regarded with more favor in England than elsewhere. Tennyson's beautiful poem of "The Lord of Burleigh" is founded on the fact of a misalliance in one of the great English houses, and the moral of the poem seems to be the danger and impropriety of such marriages. Their penalty, according to the poet, is death. It is a capital offence in England, according to Tennyson, to marry above your rank.

"For a trouble weighed upon her,
And perplexed her night and morn
With the burden of an honor
Unto which she was not born."

In marriage, however, there is but one real misalliance. Two people can be happy and good in marriage who differ in a thousand ways; who belong to different races, nations, civilizations; who belong to different classes, circles, castes; who differ in taste, talent, culture. They can be happy notwithstanding these differences, and often because of them. The differences attract and interest each the other, as the positive and negative poles of the magnet attract each other. So the poet says: —

"Are not we formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar?
Such difference, without discord, as can make
The sweetest sounds?"

But the real misalliance in marriage is when the aims are different, when the fundamental, practical convictions are different; when the husband and wife differ radically as to what they wish to do and be. If one wishes to make a show, and the other wishes to do something real; if one aims at appearance, and the other at reality; if one cares only for pleasure, and the other for work; if the one wishes to lead a religious life, and the other a worldly life, — then, to be sure, they may walk together side by side through the world, but it is no real marriage of heart or life, no real communion of spirit, no

companionship of soul. They are not helpmeets in any real sense. It is the marriage of the cedar and thistle. And the only cure for this evil is such a real love as shall bring their aims together, as shall enable one to enter into the convictions and objects of the other, till they grow at last into one spirit and purpose.

But there are other misalliances as inconsistent as the marriage of the cedar and thistle. There are moral misalliances which we may consider.

One of these is the compromise between right and wrong; the attempt to marry justice and injustice, humanity and cruelty, truths and lies. We have had a great deal of it in this country, and have suffered in consequence. Now a compromise itself is not wrong, when no principle is involved. It is, in fact, the element of all practice. We could not do anything without compromises. In common life we always have to split the difference, to give up something we want in order to get something else. Two persons could not live together a day without mutual compromises. So in politics, compromises are necessary. If you want to carry an election, you must unite a multitude holding a great variety of opinions, and each must give up something he would like to have; each must be willing to wait, and postpone his wish, and realize only a part of it now, hoping to have more hereafter. The most impracticable radical, who has denounced compromises all his life, the moment he begins to act begins to

make compromises; and it is right and proper to do so. There is nothing wrong in it when he only gives up his own interests. The evil is in giving up principle, giving up justice, giving up honor and truth. That we did formerly, in the old compromises between freedom and slavery; for in those we did not surrender our own interests merely, but the rights of others.

Everything which men seek after in this world has its price marked upon it. If you wish it, pay the just price for it, but do not expect to acquire it without. Many of the failures, defalcations, and disasters of the business world to-day, which discourage enterprise and leave labor unemployed, come from the habits of speculation which always attend and follow a great war. A few years since half the world was trying to become rich, not by industry and economy in one's own regular business, but by speculation. But the man who speculates is a gambler, and a gambler is one who wishes to make money without paying the price; to accumulate by luck, not by industry. To marry commerce to speculation is a misalliance which leads to no good. It has plunged the nation into untold suffering and disaster.

Another misalliance is that of inconsistent expectations. In the outward world we do not hope to gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, but in social life we perpetually make this mistake. In selecting the agent of a corporation, a town

treasurer, the cashier of a bank, or in filling other offices requiring ability and involving responsibility, we often select a man because he is smart, not because he is honest. After a while, if he yields to temptation and runs away with the funds, we are much surprised. We had been hoping evidently to gather grapes from thorns. A Massachusetts district sends a man to Congress whom all men know to have very little pretence to high principle; one, perhaps, who ridicules conscience as though it were cant. He is sent because he can say sharp things against the opposite party. Then the voters are amazed when for some personal reason he votes against their interests. They wanted a thistle, but they expected it to be a thistle for their enemies and a fig-tree for themselves.

There are few persons who like to be bad; who deliberately propose to themselves a life of dishonesty, meanness, falsehood, selfishness, and sin. No, most men mean to be generous, noble, and true, but they are not ready to pay the price. They wish for the satisfactions which come from wrong-doing and those of right-doing at the same time, or else to get enough out of selfishness to-day to be able to be generous to-morrow. They will be mean now and noble by and by. They will be idle, careless, self-indulgent now, and become industrious and temperate hereafter. But no such alliance is possible. You cannot go in opposite directions. Each step in wrong takes you so much farther from right, makes

it just so much more difficult to return. You are forming habits which become stronger every day and every hour. If you wish to be wise, pure, generous, when you are old, you must begin to be so when you are young.

Men who enter public life should understand that they will often be obliged to choose between their interest and their duty, between the public service and their private advancement. The union of the two is a misalliance; the attempt to unite them will be a failure. If they will devote themselves to the public good, leaving their own fame, fortune, success, to take care of itself, if they only seek to do what is right and wise, then they will have an easy and a straightforward path. Their work will simplify itself wonderfully. But if they are keeping an eye also to their own position and fortune, and are seeking to advance these, they will become like so many of our public men, narrowing their minds to little local questions of party success; voting for anything they think is popular, whether it is right or wrong; seeking to win the suffrage of the ignorant by pandering to their prejudices; advocating inflation to-day and contraction to-morrow, as one or the other seems likely to prevail; putting grand principles into their platform, and bitterly denouncing those who honestly try to carry them out. These are thy gods, O Israel! mere weathercocks, turned about by the last breath of the crowd!

There are other alliances, however, which are

thought to be misalliances, and are not so; principles which are supposed to be at war, but which really make the strongest union.

Reason and religion form a noble alliance with each other. Religion is trust in God, obedience to God springing out of love for God. Reason is the exercise of the noblest power he has given us in the search for his truth. When these are united, what a grand union! The marriage of truth and love is the symbol of the highest alliance of all, from which are born the fairest blessings of earth. The children of this marriage are knowledge, beauty, goodness, use. Religion divorced from reason becomes superstition. Reason divorced from religion gives us only doctrines of despair. Together they create a new heaven and earth of peace, love, and progress.

In these days we hear much of the war between science and religion. There can be no war between true science and true religion. Science is knowledge; religion, as defined by Jesus, is love. Knowledge and love cannot be at war with each other, for both are powers planted in the soul by the Almighty.

The division of labor, made necessary by the abundance of work to be done in modern life, has placed men of science in one department and men of religion in another. Scientific men have little time to devote to religion; religious men little time to study science. But this is unfortunate, since

it suggests that these two departments of life are hostile. When we find great scientists, like Newton, Peirce, Agassiz, reverencing divine truth, and religious men, like Kingsley, Jacobi, and Schleiermacher studying science, we discover how much higher this union can carry one than either pursuit by itself.

I once heard a speaker announce as her opinion that whereas hitherto religion had been thought to be the love of God, henceforth religion would be the love of man. In this one-sided statement it was assumed that the two were foreign and opposed, instead of being mutually helpful and necessary to each other. This speaker was as narrow in her theory as the theologians who make the love of God without the love of man the only duty. The two loves are not to be divided. You can possess no divine love without human love, no human love apart from divine. Reformers should understand that no stable reform is accomplished by going from one extreme to the other. The pendulum will always swing back again to the other side. The son of a stiff conservative will probably be a radical reformer, and the daughter of this radical reformer will very likely join the Roman Catholic Church. That is apt to be the result of ultraism.

One moral misalliance is the attempt in religion to marry the letter which killeth and the spirit which giveth life. Christianity is a spiritual religion. Its worship is universal; not at Gerizim,

nor Jerusalem, but everywhere, so that it be in spirit and truth. Neither Jesus nor his apostles instituted any fixed forms or any fixed creed. They left men's minds free to think out, each for himself, his opinions; and they left the Church free to find such forms as should suit it, and be useful. But even in Paul's time many Christians regretted losing the magnificent Jewish worship, and longed for some great and solemn ceremonies. So, by degrees, came in the pomps of Catholicism. And even in the Protestant Church there is a constant tendency to make forms of worship essential, — ends instead of means. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the quiet of the Lord's Day, the worship of the church, — these are all good and useful when they bring us near to God and inspire us with love for him. When we baptize little children it is a good thing, if we do it as a sign of the tenderness of God to these little ones, and to suggest that we must be innocent as they are to enter the kingdom of heaven. But if we think it is somehow necessary for their salvation, or that they are safer for being baptized, then we marry God's sublime truth to a low superstition. It is a good thing to come together in memory of Christ, and to take bread and wine together, if we do it to remind ourselves that the highest communion is that of faith and love. If we sit together in heavenly places, so that earthly distinctions may disappear, and we become an army of the living God, communing with all the good in all

lands and times, — that elevates us and purifies us. But if we suppose that there is any superior sacredness in the bread and wine in themselves, or any virtue in the mere act of partaking them, then we marry the love of our Master to an outworn paganism. Let us go forward, and not backward; forward into deeper life, into a nobler religion, into larger freedom, into manlier piety, forgetting the things behind and reaching out to the things before. In pagan lands people wear amulets on their breast, and trust to them for safety. Let us beware lest we make such amulets out of any Christian sacraments or out of any Christian beliefs.

Another moral misalliance is of the love of God with the fear of God. All Christians admit and believe that true religion consists in the love of God. But many also think that men ought to be brought to God by terror. So they represent the Almighty as full of wrath, and describe him as angry, jealous, and ready to seize an occasion to plunge his children into a fiery torment. But we cannot hold in our mind these two conceptions, — a God of love and a God of wrath. Such notions cannot be married. One must give way to the other. While we love God we cannot be afraid of him; while we are afraid of him we cannot love him. It is right to be afraid, but not of God. Be afraid of yourself, be afraid of sin, be afraid of the consequences of sin, here and hereafter, but never be afraid of God.

Again, we unite the cedar and the thistle whenever we confound moral distinctions in conduct and life, whenever we attempt to justify wrong or excuse it, whenever we marry high principles and low conduct. Then we confuse and debase our lives. I sometimes think it better not to have a lofty standard, than to have it and be false to it. The sin against the Holy Ghost is to defy and resist the truth which we have clearly seen.

Beware of these moral misalliances. Do not allow yourselves, having adopted principles of duty and right, to be faithless to them. Do not consent to be drawn down to a lower plane of conduct. Keep to your standard. In our State House, among the battle-flags which hang in its lower hall, flags torn and smoked and burnt on many a bloody field, flags which no one can look at without a sense of pity and pride, there is one staff from which its banner was wholly torn away, and which stands there a naked pole. It was carried into the blazing tumult of Fort Wagner on that memorable night when the colored soldiers from Massachusetts received their baptism of blood, and lifted their whole race out of contempt to the level of men. The bearer of the flag was wounded and fell, but crawled out of the fray, hugging his staff to his breast, saying, "It did not touch the ground!" Let us cling to our standard of right; cling to whatever remains of it; cling to the smallest shred of duty; be faithful in the least, as this hero was faithful.

Let not our standard of duty ever touch the ground. It is so easy to give up our principles; so hard to stand by them. It is so hard to remember the dreams of our youth, so hard to fight the good fight, day by day, year by year. But we lose all if we willingly yield anything, or if we yield at the last. What avails it to have stood by the flag through the roar of a long battle, if we surrender at the end? Let the cedar stand alone, firm and tall, on its mountain height, and condescend to no base alliance with low, false, sinful evil.

Hold fast, therefore, the confidence and the rejoicing of hope, firm unto the end. "Be not weary of well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." The Roman poet said: "Do not, then, yield to evil, but rather go on more bravely in the midst of evil." What is good becomes better when we have to fight for it; truth is nobler and dearer which is earned by toil and sacrifice. "Count it all joy," says the Apostle, "that ye fall into divers temptations" and trials. Out of these comes a deeper experience, a manlier patience, a surer hope, a more intense conviction. For God loves those whom he chastens, and it is a sign of his confidence in us when he lays burdens on us. These burdens are the means by which we gain new strength, power, success.

XII.

MEN'S SINS GOING BEFORE AND AFTER THEM.

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"*Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.*"

IT is not often that you find united in the same mind the keen penetration which can distinguish finely between unapparent differences, and the large grasp of thought which can ascend to the universal laws of being. But the intellect of the Apostle Paul possessed both of these mental qualities. We find in his writings the sharpest distinctions joined with the broadest generalizations. The above passage from his first letter to Timothy is an instance of his power of delicate analysis. He here describes two kinds of human characters in a very subtle way.

"There are sins of two kinds," says the Apostle, "and virtues of two kinds; recognize them both." Some men's sins are open, patent to all; vices of *éclat*, bringing down swift and present retribution. These sins all see. They go before men to judg-

ment. The man's sins precede him; we see them before we see him. We read them in his face, hear them in his voice, recognize them in his whole being. The judgment of those sins is falling upon them almost before he can commit them. He is a careless man; he is reckless; he is passionate; he is self-indulgent; he is conceited; he is lazy. His character in all such particulars announces itself from afar. Poor fellow! We know that he is guilty of such faults before we hear of them. They go before him to judgment.

As the band of music precedes the military company, announcing its approach, so this sounding troop of follies marches before the man, causing him to be judged, to be censured, to be disliked, to be shunned by his fellow-men.

But other men's sins are latent, following after them. They are not the vices of *éclat*, but more subtle and interior, consuming slowly the centre of their being. In their case the judgment is deferred, not speedily executed, and they deem they have escaped the penalty. Thus there are two sorts of hidden lives, — the life of goodness, "hid with Christ in God;" the life of evil, hid with Satan in hell. But there is nothing covered, good or bad, which shall not be revealed, nor anything hid which shall not be known. The evil which follows after us will overtake us at last if we do not repent of it and forsake it. The good which follows after us will bless us with its presence and glory.

The story of the Pharisee and Publican gives us an example of the two kinds of evil. The sins of the Publican went before him, apparent to all. He belonged to a class whose temptations to injustice were great. It had the power of oppressing men by its extortions, of grinding the face of the poor, of cheating the treasury for its own benefit. These sins marched before these men, and the best of them were believed to be guilty of such extortion and dishonesty. They had the credit of all the wrong they did, and more. They were condemned, as a class, to infamy and dishonor. If they tried to do right, to be just and honest, no one would believe it of them. Their evil was seen, their goodness hidden.

Of the Pharisee the opposite was true. His virtues went before him, in full sight. He was what we should now call "a professor of religion," —a poor term, which ought to be banished from the church dictionary. Every one saw his fasts, heard his prayers, beheld his large contributions to the treasury of the Temple. His vices were less apparent; they were egotism, spiritual pride, want of charity, of humility, and of the love of truth. He was like the tree, fair outwardly, but rotten within, ready to fall with the first strong wind.

Within the past few years we have had many examples of men who stood fair before the community, while they were secretly doing wrong. Presidents and treasurers of manufacturing corporations and

religious missionary associations; town treasurers; bank tellers and cashiers; trustees of the property of widows and orphans, are found to have used trust money for private speculations. Usually they have begun this course of evil long before they were found out. During these years they have been respected in the community, perhaps have been teachers in Sunday schools, have given largely to missions, have stood up and exhorted in prayer-meetings. Meantime their sin has been following steadily after them. Made bold by impunity, they have grown careless, audacious, reckless. At last the sin overtakes them; the day of detection arrives. The community learns with astonishment that this man, so much trusted and honored, has been for years a thief, stealing the property of others, with which to gamble in stocks. Some of these men are now in our prisons; some have committed suicide; some have fled in disgrace. All have brought misery on themselves and their families and friends.

Probably there are now among us others of the same sort; those whose sins are steadily pursuing them, sure to overtake them by and by. What a dreadful state of mind such a man must be in! He is obliged to appear cheerful while inwardly consumed by anxiety, afraid of detection and discovery at every moment.

In one of Scott's novels there is an account of a party of fugitives escaping from their enemies,

making their way in darkness by secret paths in the mountains, and hearing behind them the deep bay of the bloodhound on their track, constantly following their footsteps. So is the man whose sin is following after him.

On one of the post-office routes of the United States money had been frequently lost. A detective was sent by the department to find the culprit. For a long time he quietly pursued his inquiries. He travelled to and fro along the route, put packages into the mail between different offices, dropped letters here and there containing marked bills. At last he discovered the office where the letters were intercepted. The postmaster was a very respectable man, married to a good wife, with two sweet little children. He kept a shop as well as the post-office. When the agent went in, he was weighing out goods to a customer. The detective said, "Can I see you in private for a moment?" The man's face turned ghastly pale. He knew that his sin had found him out. In a moment, fell in ruin his character, the respect and love of others, his peace and fortune,—all that makes life worth living. His sin had followed after him steadily during many years, and now it had come up with him. Oh, what a fool he had been! For the sinner always sees at last that he is also a fool.

In the irresistible logic of guilt, one evil leads to another, one sin is developed out of another. There is nothing abrupt, nothing casual in the process.

The road to sin is smooth, because an army of transgressions has passed over it. When such a development takes place, the community is filled with consternation. Men meet each other and say, "Have you heard what has happened? Mr. A. has turned out a defaulter. Mr. B. has been robbing his bank. How could he have done it?" Alas! he did it long ago, when he took the first step, when he diverged a very little way from the path of right. After that, every other step was easy, natural, and logical.

But while you condemn the man, pity him. Think of his misery during all these years. He knows that his sin is following after him; knows that it will one day find him out. Meantime he lives in perpetual fear; a nameless dread hangs over him at every moment. Certainly sin is the greatest of follies. Such a man digs a mine under his house, fills it with gunpowder, makes a train from it to the railroad where the hot sparks are falling, and then places himself over the mine, waiting for the explosion.

Likewise the good works of some persons are manifest beforehand. There is a goodness which is gracious, and everywhere beloved; a goodness which hurts no one's prejudices, interferes with no one's opinions. Some persons are born with good tempers, sweet dispositions, lovely manners. They make sunshine wherever they come. They are like Guido's Apollo, preceded and attended by the beau-

tiful Hours. A band of graces goes before them; soft music heralds their approach. These are the saints whom all admire; the saints of society; the heroes of the winning cause. It is easy for them to be good-natured, sympathetic, kind, for they are made so. We will be thankful for this sort of goodness, for it makes life fair, and these lessons of kindliness are known and read of all men. They are our alphabet of virtue, easily learned. The sun, I suppose, finds no difficulty in shining; he cannot help being radiant; and these fair souls find no difficulty in saying and doing kind things. They radiate sunshine naturally.

But some men have a good inward purpose, surrounded by a harsh, ungraceful, egotistical, combative, or disagreeable manner. They try to be kind; they only succeed in being patronizing. They struggle to please; they displease by the very effort. They come to see you, desiring to make themselves agreeable. In five minutes they have engaged you in a sharp dispute. They are sometimes so diffident that they seem proud. They would give the world to be loved, and they appear indifferent. They go through life sad and gloomy, walking always on the shady side of the street, and so men call them sullen. I confess in reading Dante I have felt a pity for his poor sullen people, whom he thought fit to immerse in the mud of hell, and whose words came bubbling up through the slime, saying, "Sullen were we in the sweet

air that is gladdened by the sun, carrying lazy smoke in our hearts; now lie we sullen here in the black mire." Poor souls! they perhaps did not wish to be sullen; they could not help themselves. I do not think that the Almighty Judge will confirm Dante's hard sentence. I like Burns's view better: —

> "Who knows *the heart*, 't is He alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord, its separate tone;
> Each spring, its various bias.
> Then at the balance let 's be mute;
> We never can adjust it;
> What 's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what 's resisted."

Old Dr. Beecher was an instance of one whose good works followed him. In him we saw a man brought up to believe with undoubting faith that men can be saved only by orthodox opinions. Earnestly desirous of doing good, bent on finishing the work he had to do, he was yet from this narrowness unable to do justice to an opponent. Before him marched in full view his bigotry, his bitterness against heretics, and his superstitious fear of an avenging God. But his good works followed after, — his practical labors for temperance, for education, for human improvement, his desire to revive vital religion in human hearts; and so at last, when he came to be old, he had the happiness of seeing himself surrounded by troops of friends

and a wonderful family of children. I think his children must have astonished him sometimes. I think he could not ever quite understand such heretical utterances as those which we find, for example, in some of Mrs. Stowe's novels. But thus he was taught tolerance and charity in his old age, and his good works followed him to the grave and accompanied him into heaven.

Not what we *seem*, therefore, but what we *are*, is the important thing. Not the outward life, but the inward life, is our real being. And this inward real life is that which, following always behind us, will one day overtake us; which one day is to be seen and known of all men. For there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, nothing hidden which shall not be known.

It has been taught in the Christian church that there is to be a day of judgment, when all the world will appear before God to be judged. Then the sheep will go on the right hand and the goats on the left. Then we shall give an account of all the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Each man will be judged and sentenced in the presence of the collected universe.

But this is too prosaic and literal. The true judgment day is always at hand. "The hour cometh, *and now is*," said Jesus, "when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth." The day of judgment is the

perpetual revelation of truth. The best definition of it was once given by a boy, deaf and dumb, whose inward eye was opened while his outward senses were closed. "The judgment day," said he, "is to see ourselves as we are, and to see God as he is." It is first an inward judgment, — a judgment on ourselves, — and then that which is within coming to the light.

"If we judge ourselves," says the Apostle, "we shall not be judged." The important fact is to know ourselves, and not to deceive ourselves. The important fact is to have inward truth, to love what is real, to seek to know what we are — really are — in the sight, not of men, but of God. When we do this, we judge ourselves, and need no outward judgment.

Every one has a hidden life as well as an open life. There is that in each of us which no one can ever fully understand. People complain that they are "not understood." Who is ever understood? They seek "to define their position." It is an idle attempt. Let us leave it to time and to God to define our position. He will make everything plain at last.

David was grieved because he saw the wicked man in power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree. But he went by, and lo! he was gone, and his place knew him no more.

We feel vexed because bad men succeed in getting place and power. The charlatan is followed by

crowds; the demagogue gets chosen to office. We have seen some very mean men elected to the highest offices in the United States. We have seen some very noble men fail of public recognition. But in the end justice rises up, and weighs them both in her impartial scales. Men in office or out of office remain exactly what they were before. Wherever the great man sits is the head of the table. Wherever the mean man sits will be the foot of the table.

In Boston stands the statue of Josiah Quincy. He was never a very popular man, — he was too manly, too independent to be popular. Wherever he was, he was upright and honorable, open and manly. As Mayor of Boston, he displeased many persons by his independent course, and so failed at last of a re-election. I heard him give a farewell address to the citizens in the Old South Church. He quoted—and he had a right to quote and apply to himself — the words of the Prophet Samuel when about to resign his position as ruler of Israel: "'Here I stand; witness against me today. Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? At whose hands have I received a bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?' And they said, 'Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, nor taken aught of any man.'" And now, after many years, the good works of Josiah Quincy have overtaken him, and he is recognized as one of those

figures who must have a statue, though they do not need a statue, because they are themselves statues,—permanent illustrations of what is just, honorable, and true.

Close beside that image of Roman courage and independence stands the statue of Franklin, a man also much misunderstood in his own time. He was insulted hour after hour in the presence of amused English noblemen, by an abusive Attorney-General; he was misrepresented and maligned by his Virginia colleague in France while devoting himself to the service of his country. But, as Monadnock or the Matterhorn may be covered to the summit with creeping mists, but is at last sure to come out again, a great altar of God for adoration, a kingly spirit throned among the hills, a dread ambassador from earth to heaven, so these great souls emerge from slander and abuse, and are known at last as the lights of their age and the honor of their land.

The truths here stated are very serious, both as warning and encouragement. To be tracked and followed by one's sins is a very serious thing; to be followed by what is good in us is encouraging. Both facts show us the grandeur of the soul, the value of life, and the importance of what we do and are. If all things come to the light, if our acts come to judgment, it is because God values them, and counts every incident and adventure of our life as important to the universe. Thus, as the Apostle says, "we are a spectacle to men and

angels." By seeing and knowing the evil there is in us, we are to be cured of it.

Herein we see that what appears evil can become the means of greater ultimate good. Herein we see the infinite love of the Father penetrating into the griefs, woes, and wrongs of life. Thus shall anguish and remorse prepare the way for blessings. Thus shall the dark background of human depravity be transfigured and transformed by the divine radiance of truth. Thus shall men be brought to repentance and life, and at last every knee bow to the divine truth, and God become the all in all.

XIII.

EVERY "NOW" THE DAY OF SALVATION.

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I SUPPOSE we have all heard earnest sermons preached, the object of which was to prove the importance of the particular "now" in which we then chanced to be. "It is the end of the year," said the preacher; "perhaps we shall never see another year. *Now* is the only time we have for repentance." Or perhaps he said, "You are *now* serious; you *now* feel the importance of a religious life; this may be the last time God may move your heart. Begin, therefore, to obey and love him *now*." Or he may have said, if he were a revival preacher, "This season of religious awakening is possibly your only opportunity. Use it now." It was this particular *now* which was the day of salvation.

But let us go further, and consider a larger doctrine concerning "the now." Not any particular "now," but all "nows," are days of salvation. Every now; now everywhere; now always, is the important moment. All that is interesting and vital is concentrated in the present hour. Not by dwelling

on the past, not by living in the future, but by bringing the past and the future into the present, do we accomplish anything real, gain any true satisfaction.

Religious people formerly believed that it was their duty to desert the present life and dwell in meditation on the world to come. This was carried furthest by the monks and anchorites of former days. But even yet the same state of mind is sometimes taught as a duty. We are told to fix our mind on the future life; to consider our last end; to meditate on immortality and heaven and the world to come. No doubt it is interesting to speculate on the nature of a future state; but I doubt if there is much religious profit therein. I do not think it was intended that we should think much about death or the hereafter while we are here. God has separated the future life from this by an impenetrable veil, to show that he means us, while we are here, to think of this world, not of that one. All our duties are here and now. We are to be interested in these, not in what is to come by and by. To try to meditate on a world of which we can know scarcely anything cannot be a duty. It leaves the mind empty. It is evident that God does not mean to have us think much about the other world while we are in this one. It would take off our attention too much from present interests and duties.

More than that, we do not enter immortality by thinking of a future life, but by communing with

God and infinite realities now. "Immortality," says Dr. Channing, "must begin here." He here expresses the same thought which Jesus declared in those memorable words to Martha, — so often repeated, so seldom understood, — "I am resurrection and life." Martha thought resurrection was some future event. "I know," said she, "that my brother will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." "I am resurrection and life," replied the Master; "he who believes in me," — he who has my faith, he who sees God's truth and love as I see it,— "though he were dead, yet shall he live." He who has this faith does not die. Death is nothing to him. He is so full of life that death becomes a fact of little consequence, not worth occupying his attention. He believes he must live on, not because of any argument, but because he has immortal life abiding in him. A soul full of divine life, living from God for man, giving itself to great duties for this world and for humanity, has not time to think of death, and has no occasion to think of it. It is immortal already. It has already passed the gate of death. The death of the soul is the only death we need fear. If our soul has become alive by faith, love, and goodness, we have immortality now.

God himself is the perpetual now. When he gave his name to Moses, he said, "I am the I Am." Only when we live in the present do we commune with him, the ever-present God, the eternal Now. Even the heathen had a sight of this truth. On

the temple at Delphi was engraven the two Greek letters "epsilon" and "iota," meaning "Thou Art." It was the response of natural religion to the religion revealed in the soul. The poor insane poet, Christopher Smart, is said to have written while in the asylum that striking hymn which is, so far as I know, the only place where this idea is expressed in literature: —

> "Tell them 'I am,' Jehovah said
> To Moses, while earth heard with dread;
> And, smitten to the heart,
> At once, above, beneath, around,
> All nature, without voice or sound,
> Replied, 'O Lord, thou art!'"

He only knows the future well who knows the present well. The sagacious man can foresee, because he can see. Insight is the only foresight. This, I think, applies to all prophetic power, even to that which is considered miraculous. It is suggested in that phrase which Jesus used more than once, "The hour cometh, and now is." Jesus saw what was to come, because he saw the germs and seeds of the future in the present. This he implied when he rebuked the Pharisees for not being able to see the signs of the times. "You can foretell that it is to be a fair or foul day to-morrow, by observing the looks of the clouds around the setting sun. Why cannot ye discern the signs of the times in the same way?" The present hour is

always big with the future. No historic fact comes outwardly in its manifestation till it has long been present inwardly by its law. Jesus foresaw his own death, the denial of Peter, the betrayal of Judas, the coming destruction of Jerusalem, because he knew what was already in men. He had seen the clouds gathering for that great storm. He understood that the logic of events would compel the rulers and Pharisees, unless they repented, to kill him. All his severe rebukes had for their object to force them to stop and think, and perhaps repent. And if they killed him, he knew what was to follow. Rejecting the peaceful king, the spiritual Messiah, nothing remained but that they should look for an outward salvation, a freedom for the nation from its Roman yoke, and this would bring the destruction of Jerusalem and the people. All this Jesus foresaw because he looked with such profound vision into the present state of men's souls. He entered into the "now" by such penetrating insight that he could predict what was to come out of it.

There is a sacramental religion which promises a future salvation on condition of certain actions which are supposed to possess a saving efficacy. But we degrade the sacraments when we ascribe to them any such magical charm. Unless they fill us now with better convictions and larger love, they can do us no good hereafter. No mere routine of ritual or church-going will help us, except by lifting the soul nearer to God. We must believe in a

present salvation, and possess that. Christ comes to us here and now. Every *now* is the day of salvation. We are saved when we escape from our selfishness into love, from our worldliness into purity, from our false lives into true ones. Then we are figuratively said to be born again; for it is like going into another world to pass out of selfishness into generosity, and to enter again the childhood of simplicity and innocent purposes.

In the same way we need a present Bible, a Bible to meet our present wants. The Bible helps us when we see in it what applies to our own day and time. We recognize in each of its characters the type of our own temptations, trials, hopes, sins, and pardon. We are Adam and Eve in the Garden. We are Abraham, going out he knows not where, trusting in God. We are David, trusting, hoping, sinning, repenting, being forgiven. If we look, we shall find something of Peter in ourselves, something of the Pharisee, of the Sadducee, something of Pilate, something, perhaps, of Judas. What good does it do to believe that God forgave David his sin and Peter his sin, unless we can believe that God will forgive our sin also? The Bible is the book of books, because it is so filled with life that it seems to talk with us, to walk with us as Jesus walked to Emmaus with his disciples, and our heart burns within us as we read it. The best proof of its inspiration is that it is always new, always fresh, a present inspiration.

In like manner heaven and hell are both here. We escape a future hell by coming out of our present hells. We reach a future heaven by the portal of a present heaven. How many hells do we not pass through in this world, — hells of anger, of pride, of cruel hatred, of cold selfishness, of bitter remorse! The worm which does not die is the sense of the irreparable past, the thought, "I might have done differently, but it is now too late." The fire which is not quenched is the unsatisfied desire for more; the ambition which never has enough, the greed which can never be contented; the vanity, conceit, or pride which makes itself the one object in the universe. And we escape these present hells and enter a present heaven whenever we can really trust ourselves to a Father's love; submit ourselves to a divine will; consent to be led by an infinite wisdom, and so walk in this world surrounded by a perpetual light from above.

The joy of childhood is that it is intent on the present. It does not brood, it does not long. Brooding and longing are also worms which gnaw the heart. Wishing for something we have not got, lamenting over something we have lost, — this takes the element of joy out of existence, and leaves us vapid, feeble, dissatisfied. Satisfaction means joy in the present hour. We are satisfied when we are able to see in the *now* enough of beauty, enough of good, to feed the soul. Some people are never satisfied because always thinking, "Why can I not have

that? What a pity I did not do this!" The thing they do not possess is that which they prize the most.

Genius also, as well as happiness, is the power of seeing what there is in the present moment. Talent takes what has been thought and said before and reproduces it in new and brilliant forms. But genius is the power of seeing, in some present fact, the divine truth and beauty which no one else has noticed. Most of our literature comes from men of talent, who give us repetitions of what men of genius said in past centuries. Young poets give us dilutions of Tennyson or Browning; young critics offer us Macaulay or Mill, as the case may be, in a feebler form; artists copy other artists instead of copying nature; orators model themselves on the standard and well-known masterpieces in their line. But genius does not repeat the old things. To genius, Now is the accepted time. Shakspeare finds all humanity in his own soul and in the men and women around him, and throws the light from his own heart into history, illuminating its darkness, as the revolving light on our coast sweeps the horizon with its helpful flame. He brings up the dead past, and makes that a living present, till Cæsar and Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra, the streets of ancient Rome, the Rialto of Venice, the old kings of Scotland, come up before us alive and fresh. The living *now* vivifies past and future.

Between our eyes and the fact which is before

our eyes is usually a film, composed of what we have heard and read about it. We see things through this glass darkly. Genius breaks the glass and sees them face to face. To genius, the present fact is the most interesting of all events, full of wisdom, interest, meaning. And the blessed power of genius is this: that it can enable *us* also to find this wonder and beauty in all that is around us and before us. We go to Scotland or to Cumberland to view the places which Walter Scott or Wordsworth have made interesting. Looking through their eyes we can find something interesting in what otherwise we should never notice.

Goodness also consists chiefly in this, that *now* is its accepted time. To be good is to be able to do the present duty. Some of us are always a little behindhand, and never quite catch up with what we ought to perform. We see the train going out of one end of the station just as we are entering the other. Instead of doing with our might whatever our hand finds to do, we think we shall find a more convenient season hereafter. How much would *we* not give for an opportunity of talking with the Apostle Paul! Felix, the proconsul, had the opportunity, but he sent Paul away, and said he would see him again some other time. Probably the hour had come for his afternoon rest, and so he put off his conversation with the Apostle. Of all mottoes, the one I should like to have written over my door would be, "Do it Now." Was it Dr. Johnson who

had engraved on his watch the Greek text, *Νὺξ ἔρχεται*, — "The Night cometh"?

The postponement of duty usually comes from cowardice. We have not the courage to face the present moment, and so with one consent we beg to be excused. But I once knew a woman so brave that she never shrank from an occasion, or lost an opportunity, or postponed a work. She always seemed to have more power than she could use. She was ready to meet any person, any need, any demand. When the thing was decided, then it was done. Her thought and act were one. I have known a man who never said, "I will think about it and tell you to-morrow." He was always ready to do the best he could do now. In that way he put so much into life that he seemed to have done the work of ten men. It is said that the productive power of an acre of land has never yet been ascertained. So I think that it has never yet been ascertained how much can be done in a single day. Time is not wanting. There is time enough for all we need to learn, to see, to do. What we need is power, that is, quantity of life.

The Jews, in the time of Christ, were expecting the reign of the Messiah, which they called the Kingdom of Heaven. They had read the prophetic descriptions of those glorious days, and believed in them. When Messiah comes he will teach us all things, he will help us do all things. It will be easy then to be good, it will be natural to love God

and man. But till he comes we must remain as we are. One of the marvellous qualities of Jesus was his ability to see that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and that he himself was the Messiah. "The hour cometh and now is," he said. "I that speak to thee am he." The Jews had not the power to rise to this height of immediate vision, and see with open eyes the actual reign of God. "No," said they, "you cannot be the Christ. It is blasphemy for *you* to profess to be the Christ. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Can anything which we see and know be divine? We know this man whence he is, but when Christ comes no one will know from whence he came. Messiah will not walk and talk with the common people like one of themselves. He will be too great and inaccessible for that. How absurd, indeed how wicked, for a man to say he is the Christ, when we know his father and mother, and whose brothers and sisters are with us! His father is Joseph the carpenter, whose shop is in the street called El-Husseph, in Nazareth." Most people are mentally too far-sighted, — they can see what is at a distance, not what is near. In the vale of Chamounix you cannot see the summit of Mont Blanc; but when you go fifteen miles away, it rises above all lesser mountains, and soars up into the skies in vast fields of dazzling snow, with frozen rivers plunging down enormous ravines; rises like a cloud of incense from the earth, in its charm and wonder. So the world had to go away several

centuries from Jesus before it could behold him. His own greatness was to be able to find in himself the essential character of the Messiah; to find power in himself to fulfil all prophecy; to know that the hour had come and was already present; to realize the majestic visions of Isaiah and David, and to say, "I who speak to thee am he."

In taking this ground, Jesus went back to the original Mosaic idea. The whole religion of Moses bore directly on the present life. Other religions laid the main stress on the future world and disparaged the present. But original Hebraism said not a word about the hereafter; it put its whole religious life into the hour. "Now" was its accepted time. Its God was a present God; Jehovah dwelling in the midst of the people, going before them in their journeys, staying with them as their King. This life was so full of God's presence that they did not think of the future. A future life is hardly mentioned in the Old Testament. The religious problem of the Brahmins and Buddhists is how to escape from time into eternity; the problem of Judaism and Christianity is how to put eternity into time.

Jesus renewed and fulfilled the old Mosaic idea, the old prophetic vision of "Immanuel, God with us." The Tabernacle of God was with men; the New Jerusalem came down from heaven. The Resurrection and the Life were not future, but present. Christianity came as a new inspiration to

man, bringing God near, immortality near, heaven near; and making them all present, immediate, a part of each man's life, not far from any one of us.

The Christian Church has often backslidden to the standpoint of Brahmanism in asserting that heaven must be postponed to the next world, and that it is necessary to be miserable and sinful as long as we live in this. It has loved to say that "former days were better than these," and to complain of the degeneracy of the times. But true Christianity never does this. It looks at the Now as miraculous and full of a divine spirit. It makes the world full of God now, — nature full of God, man a child of God, the Holy Spirit coming and dwelling in all hearts that open themselves to receive it.

What we need, therefore, at this time as much as ever, is to believe in a present salvation, and to be sure that Now is the accepted time. We need a God at hand, not afar off; a present and not a past inspiration; a present Saviour, a present Immortality, an eternal life abiding in us, and a heaven in our midst.

Perhaps it may be objected that to live only in the moment belongs to animals and to children; that the chief dignity of man is to look before and after, — to go back to the past and forward to the future; that so only he finds true freedom and can emancipate himself from the dominion of time and space; that progress consists in bringing the past and future to bear on the present, and that goodness

consists in rising into communion with universal truth and immortal goodness. I grant it; but this does not disturb my argument.

The animal lives in the present moment only. The child lives in the present moment chiefly. The man returns to the past and dwells there, penetrates the future and lingers there, lives in memory, lives in fancy. The first stage of being is to live only or chiefly in the present; the second stage is to live in the past or the future. But the highest condition is to come back once more to the present but on a higher plane; to bring the past and future together in every moment; to live now, fed with all the resources of history and prophecy. The present moment is the element of real life; but this life is to be enriched by memory and by hope, by experience and by expectation.

Therefore, we say again, that *now* is the accepted time. The Bible of the past, venerable and holy, must be translated into the language of to-day, and become a living Bible to meet the needs of men and women here in New England. Christ, about whose past history men are so doubtful, will become more and more the centre of the human race as his salvation reigns within, and comes outwardly into our own society to save publicans and sinners in our midst. The great record of the New Testament will cease to be an object of criticism when we behold its miracles surpassed by those done by the power of Jesus among ourselves. All doubts

of a future life will cease when we have eternal life abiding in us here. All gloom concerning sin and misery will pass away when we see how our own past sin and pain have been transfigured by Christianity, and changed into goodness and joy. Thus shall the past and future be made one with the present, and every Now become the accepted time and day of salvation.

XIV.

STANDING IN THE DOORWAY.

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WE must all have noticed the habit so many have of standing in doorways, — in the doorway of a railway station, of a lecture hall, of a church, of places of amusement. Sometimes people stand in the doorway looking out, but will not go out. After church is over, or when the concert or lecture is finished, they walk rapidly till they reach the doorway, and then they relax their hurried steps, and come to a standstill, regardless of those behind, who are thus hindered from going forth. When they arrive at the door, they hesitate as if uncertain which way to go, and reluctant to trust themselves to the uncertain world outside. Like the people in the hymn,

> "They linger, shivering, on the brink,
> And fear to launch away."

In like manner people hesitate about going in. At public meetings of all sorts, at political meetings, meetings for philanthropic or religious objects, men

fill the doorways, looking in, but not able to make up their minds to enter. They will not go in themselves, and those who are going in they hinder. They are not quite sure whether or not they wish to go in. They do not know if the meeting is for them, if they belong there, if they have a right to enter, if they shall find a seat, if they shall enjoy themselves. The motive which led them to the place was strong enough to bring them to the door, but not strong enough to carry them over the threshold.

These habits in our neighbors are so annoying that we notice them, though we may often do the same things ourselves. When we are prevented from going in or from going out by these hesitating and delaying people, we are not pleased. And sometimes I think it might be well to have placards over the doors of public places to warn persons not to linger in the passage. Just as we are warned not to walk on the grass in the Public Garden, why not have placards to remonstrate against standing in the doorway?

But a similar want of decision is to be found in other matters. There are intellectual doorways — gates of thought — where undecided persons linger, uncertain whether to go in or to stay out. There are people who cannot make up their minds to believe nor yet to disbelieve. These we call sceptics.

Now, a transient state of scepticism is, no doubt, sometimes inevitable. Men ought not to commit

themselves to a creed without reflection. There is neither sin nor shame in keeping one's mind in suspense, so long as we see no good reason for believing. Scepticism may be a step from unbelief to belief, as well as one in the other direction. As a step it is very well, only it is not well to remain standing on the step forever. Go in, or go out. It is better to do one or the other.

Doubt or uncertainty about great moral and religious truths is not an indication of mental strength, but rather of mental weakness. There is no strength in unbelief; all mental strength comes from believing. It comes from the sight of truth, from clear and strong convictions. There may be no guilt in doubting, but there is always weakness.

There are, however, those who take credit to themselves as advanced thinkers, because they doubt and question all things. When a steamboat gets into a fog, it does not advance; if it does, it is in danger of shipwreck. The *mind* which is in a fog cannot advance; it drifts helplessly, without aim.

This is a disease of our time, and one which we all share. We are in a transition state, — standing in the doorway of many a belief. Where our fathers were certain, we doubt. This is unavoidable; only let us not prolong the situation unnecessarily. Let us make up our minds when we can, and be glad to do so. Let us believe as much as we are able honestly and sincerely to believe, being

sure that the mind was made to see and accept truth, and not to remain in perpetual uncertainty.

We cannot believe all that our fathers did, for in some things their belief seems to us to have been false. But we can only advance by believing more, not by believing less. They believed God to be a stern king; let us believe in him as an infinite Father. Thus, we believe more than they did, since the idea of a father includes justice and mercy both; authority and love and wisdom. I read tracts and hear sermons which solemnly warn us not to trust too much to the divine mercy, because God is not only merciful, but also just. They tell us it is necessary first to be afraid because he is just, and then to be glad because he is merciful. A pious man, on this theory, is always vacillating between fear and hope. Dr. Emmons, who preached this doctrine during fifty years, did not know, on his death-bed, whether he was to be saved or not. He hoped he was, but thought it very possible he might be lost. He was still standing in the doorway; he had not gone into the peace of the gospel. But a child who loves his father has no such alternations; no such chill of fear, followed by the fever of hope. He does not say, "I ought not to trust too entirely to my father's love; I ought to remember he is just as well as merciful." No; he trusts his father without doubt or fear. He knows that his father's justice is only another form of his love. He does not stand in

the doorway; he goes in, and is at home and at peace.

If we reject the doctrine of the Trinity, and do not accept God as a mysterious triad, let us not, therefore, stand hesitating in the doorway of thought concerning God, but endeavor to enter in and learn more of him. We may see more of God in the faith of reason and in the light of advancing science than our fathers did; more and not less. We may know God as the ever-present power, pervading all time and space, — filling the vast regions which astronomy has disclosed, the enormous periods of time which geology reveals. Yet we may find him no less present as a father, as a guiding providence, as protector and friend. We may still say, "Our Father who art in heaven." We may say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Let us not stand in the doorway of this majestic temple where God abides, but go in and live in that Divine Presence, and be blest.

Nor let us stand in the doorway of Christianity, hesitating whether to go in, because perhaps we have not made up our mind about miracles, or about the supernatural, or about inspiration. Do we gain peace and comfort in the words of Jesus? Is he the best teacher we can find; that the world has found? When we go to him in trouble do our souls find rest? When we are conscious of sin does he reveal to us the pardoning love of God? Has he put that spirit in our heart by which we say "Our

Father"? Christians are not what they ought to be. Granted. But has Christianity helped to break the chains of the slave? Has it brought light to the ignorant? Has it been on the side of education and progress? Has it built hospitals for the blind, the insane, the deaf and dumb? If we wish to do any good to our fellow-men, do we not appeal to Christ's teachings and promises? Then Christianity is what we need; and let us not hesitate, but go in and find food and rest and comfort.

We do not believe all that our fathers did concerning Jesus Christ. He may no longer be to us the mysterious God-man, infinite and finite at once, second person in the Trinity, eternally born from the Father. These statements are passing away; they live no longer in the faith of reason. Jesus is now the Son of God because he had the spirit of a son, and because to him God was always father. He is our dear human brother, our best teacher, our noblest friend, who lifts our thoughts from earth to heaven, from time to eternity. We have more faith in him, not less, when we thus believe, for we see more clearly all that he was and is. Only let us not stand hesitating in regard to this faith, but believe fully and earnestly all we can. Let us not stand half way in and half way out of Christianity, but gladly enter into whatever peace and strength the gospel can give to us.

And so in regard to immortality and the future life our belief has changed from that of former

days. We do not now suppose the future world to consist of a heaven of perfect bliss on one side and a hell of infinite torture on the other. We believe in progress hereafter as here; many mansions there as here, many heavens and many hells, and an infinite variety of circumstances and conditions. Therefore, we need not believe less in a future life, but more, because it is now seen to be rational and natural, a continuation of the present, with the same divine laws in both. Believing thus in immortality, let us not believe hesitatingly, but with all our mind and strength. Let us dwell in heavenly places; let immortality begin now; let us have eternal life abiding in us.

Instead of hesitating to believe any truth because we cannot believe everything, let us believe all we can; see all we can; pass through the door into the temple of knowledge and dwell therein.

Standing in the doorway of action without going in is also a disease and danger. To be practically undecided weakens the character. In fact, strength of character consists largely in the power of decision. "Be sure you are right, and then go ahead," was the saying of the backwoodsman of Texas; and in this he agreed with the Apostle James, who said, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the winds and tossed." To be able to decide, and then put forth all one's powers without further hesitation,—this makes the man of

action. We had several generals in our war who could never make up their minds, and this indecision cost the lives of many brave men.

Indecision in morals is dangerous. To stand in the doorway of a good action and refuse to go in injures the moral character. When we have made up our mind that we ought to do anything, to hesitate about doing it makes us worse. Indecision here is immorality.

Many people do not like to commit themselves. But to commit one's self to what is right is to take a great step forward. Then right doing becomes easy, which before was difficult. These are the steps upward in life. Many people refuse to join a church, or to join a temperance society, because they do not like to promise what they may not be able to perform. But to commit themselves will often help them to perform what they undertake to do. When we unite with those who are wishing to do good things, we find ourselves in a current which carries us forward in the right direction.

I know very well that we may be sometimes entrapped unwisely by such pledges. People may be persuaded to join churches where they do not feel at home, where they have no common convictions, no real sympathy, and from which it may take them a long time to become free. So political conventions sometimes let themselves be entrapped into a pledge to vote for the nominee, whoever he may be. This they have no right to do. He may

be a man unfit for the office. They have no right to promise beforehand to vote for him. They thus renounce their own right of private judgment and freedom of conscience. No one has any right to abdicate his conscience or give up his freedom of opinion. When we join a church or a society for any moral purpose, it should be distinctly understood that we have a right to leave it again if our convictions of duty change.

But, with these restrictions, it is a great help to commit one's self to what one considers good and right. Suppose Paul had hesitated about becoming a Christian after he had seen the celestial vision, how much would have been lost! He would have remained a Pharisee, but a doubting Pharisee, having lost his old faith and not having found a new one. But he committed himself. He went forward through the doorway into the Church. He became a disciple, then an apostle of Christianity. He became, as he says, "A new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new." Paul might have said, "I will go back to Jerusalem, I will think about it a while longer. The time has not come for Christianity to succeed. Let us temporize; let us wait for a few years, and the Sanhedrim will come round." But he did not stand hesitating in the doorway. He went in, and committed himself absolutely to the new faith, and so became a new creature, the great apostle of a world-wide and universal religion, the prophet of another

religion to Europe, the founder of modern civilization. Through him, Christianity dropped its Jewish dress and became the gospel for universal man.

Suppose Luther had hesitated. He might easily have done so. He might have said, "The hour has not come. The time is not ripe for such a vast movement. Let us wait a little longer. Let us try to convert the wise and prudent to our way of thinking. Consult Erasmus and see what he says." But no; Luther said, "Here I am. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen!" He must speak his word, whether men would hear or forbear. His trumpet gave no uncertain sound. He went forward alone and moved the whole world.

Suppose Garrison and his friends had hesitated, and declined to preach the abolition of slavery. They had great reason to delay. They had against them all the great forces of society, — commerce, the press, the two great political parties, all social influences, the so-called aristocracy on one side, and mobs on the other. They had with them only truth and justice. But they did not hesitate. They did not stand in the doorway, but went forth, not knowing whither they went. The Lord was on their side, and they did not fear. Human nature was on their side. Answers and encouragement came to them from all quarters, and at last they saw the triumph of their cause, and could sing their song of thanksgiving and joy.

In every man's life there come moments when he is called to decide whether to go forward or to stand still. Timidity says, "Hesitate!" Prudence says, "Be not too hasty. Take time!" Self-interest says, "You may hurt yourself; you may run risks. You may injure your prospects of worldly success." But conscience says, "The hour has come. Go and do your duty," and everything generous and noble in the heart responds, and says amen!

> "So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, 'Thou must!
> The youth replies, 'I can!'"

These are the great occasions, which come once, often not again. If we let them go by unimproved, they are lost. These are the times which try men's souls.

Let us remember that such hesitations not only injure ourselves, but injure others. We do not go in ourselves, and we hinder others who else might enter. Our indecision makes others undecided. When people see that we hesitate to believe, they think themselves wise in hesitating. Doubt becomes a fashion. Weak-minded persons take a certain pride in not believing what others have believed. They deem themselves somewhat more free and bold in their thought. When the leaders, who should go forward, stand hesitating, they hesitate too. The common people naturally love what-

ever is generous, manly, and honest. But they hesitate in expressing these sentiments because the wise and prudent refrain. Thus, when those who are in the front stand still, all behind them have to stand still too.

It is curious and sad to see how many people stand in the doorway of religion, afraid to enter in. It is often because they have a false notion of what religion is. They imagine it to be some renunciation of human and earthly life; some denial not only of evil pleasure, but also of innocent pleasure; some formal and solemn profession; something unnatural.

But in truth what does religion mean but the sense of a heavenly love, making all life full of peace? It means taking God for our Father and Friend; seeing him in the beauty of nature, in the laws of creation, in the events of life, in the glad and solemn days, in sunshine and clouds, a perpetual providence. It means seeking to do his will; walking in every right way; doing whatever is good and just and pure; making right, and not wrong, the end of life; living for noble ends and not for mean ones. It means, as our New England poet teaches us: —

> "That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt
> A great compassion clasps about;
> And law and goodness, love and force,
> Are wedded fast beyond divorce.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> That the dear Christ dwells not afar,
> The Lord of some remoter star,

Listening, at times, with flattered ear
To homage wrung from selfish fear ;
But here, amid the poor and blind,
The bound and suffering of our kind,
In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life — he lives to-day."

XV.

FOUR KINDS OF PIETY.

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I WISH we could find another word than "piety" to express our love to God, for this has fallen into some disrepute at the present time, and to many has not an attractive sound. To some it is associated with spiritual pride, hypocritical profession, religious talk which is not borne out by upright action. To others piety seems a good thing, but almost too good for this world, — good for exceptional persons, for born saints; proper enough for clergymen, but hardly to be demanded of men and women who have to work all day in the midst of worldly matters. What I wish to show, therefore, is, that true piety, or love to God, is the most simple, natural, and rational action of the human mind; that it is for every one everywhere; that it is necessary, not so much for future salvation as for present peace and for successful lives. In short, it is something which none of us can do without, and which we may all have.

But to show this I must distinguish between different kinds of piety, in order that we may perceive the difference between the substance and the accidental varying forms.

There is one important question, however, which comes first, which needs consideration. Piety is love to God. But how can love be a duty? Can we ever love as a duty, or by an effort of the will? Whatever we are commanded to do we ought to be able to do by our own efforts, for the limit of obligation is power. Anything which is an act of the will may be done in obedience to a command; but how can an affection be commanded? The child does not love his father, mother, brothers, and sisters because it is a duty, but because he is made happy by their intercourse.

How then can we love God in obedience to a command? Especially when God is so far off, an invisible being, dwelling in light inaccessible, infinitely removed from all our experience?

I answer, frankly, that it is impossible. No human effort can create love; and therefore when the New Testament makes love the fulfilment of all duty, and says that without love no duty can be done as it ought to be, it does not and cannot mean a duty which can be done by a mere effort of the will.

God, when he asks anything of us, gives us the power to do it. When he asks the child to love its parents, he makes the duty easy by causing them first to love their child. Because the child sees love

in its father's and mother's face from the beginning, it easily loves them in return. The mother's love for her infant creates, or at least develops and brings out, the answering affection of the infant. The mother's loving look is reflected from her infant's face as in a mirror. The children may say of their parents, "We love them because they first loved us." And the apostle of love, John, tells us that piety is born in the same way, — "We love Him because he first loved us."

We can therefore only love God by seeing in some way that he loves us. In this matter we cannot take the initiative. We cannot love God in order to induce him to love us. As the infant looks up into its mother's face, and sees her tender, happy smile, so we must see God's smile descending into our hearts from his inaccessible throne. We cannot go up there to find him; but be sure that, if he wishes for our love, he will come down to us and find us. What we have to do, and all that we can do, is to look up and see his goodness, open our hearts and receive his love. We can choose to receive it, or refuse. We can put ourselves in a receptive attitude, or not. When God commands us to love him, it is as if he said, "Behold how I love you."

But there are four different ways by which we look, four different methods of seeing God's love; and these produce the four different forms of piety. There may be more, and doubtless are more than

four; but these constitute the principal varieties of this great influence and this vast joy.

1. *The first kind of piety is emotional piety, or piety of the feelings.* There are two varieties of this, the sacramental and the sympathetic. Sacramental piety is born of faith in the grace of God given through sacraments. It is found most often in the great sacramental churches. There is a devout pleasure derived from taking part in the ceremonies, the festivals, the liturgies and anthems made memorable by the worship of a thousand years. There is a sincere comfort and peace felt in leaving the world of noise and traffic, and entering into the solitudes of prayer and praise, into that house of God which seems the gate of heaven. How many great and good souls, saints and martyrs, have been fed by these ceremonies and lifted above the earth by their solemn influence! The imagination is touched by the grand religious architecture, the imposing ritual, the divine music, and the vast multitude of adoring worshippers. He who cannot feel this is deficient in some of the human sentiments.

Another form of this kind of piety is the sympathetic emotion caught from crowds. This is awakened in revivals, camp-meetings, and social religious gatherings, where those who come to scoff often remain to pray. As God is felt to be near in the solemn rites and awful forms of the sacramental churches, so he is also felt to be present in

the contagious fire which runs through a meeting of warm-hearted worshippers. In both places many feel, for the first time, that God is not far from us, that we are his children, and are made to realize a father's love. They learn to love God with all their heart.

2. *The Piety of Personal Salvation.* There is a second kind of piety which comes from a sense of pardoned sin. This grace of God which brings salvation has had great power, and accomplished vast results. It has always existed side by side with sacramental and emotional piety, but it became most conspicuous as the great motive power of the Protestant Reformation. While the sacramental and emotional churches — the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Methodists — find the presence and love of God revealed to them in their public and social worship, the Calvinistic denominations struggle and agonize and pray alone, and receive a sense of God's pardoning love given to each soul for its own personal salvation. Through this struggle each one goes by himself; he is alone with his conscience and his God. He seeks and finds salvation for himself, and loves God with an intense gratitude for having ransomed and redeemed him from sin and evil. He loves God with all his soul, for that is what God has saved from despair and death.

3. *The Piety of Reason.* There is a third kind of piety, — one in which men love God with all

their mind, seeing his boundless goodness in the mysteries of creation; feeling that from him and through him and to him are all things. This is the piety which inspires the sublime song of Milton, the universal prayer of Pope, the solemn litanies of Wordsworth, and the tender strains of Whittier. These poets see God in the majesty of Nature, in the changing year, in the vast laws of the universe, which are from everlasting to everlasting. They say: —

> "These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God. The rolling year
> Is full of thee."

Swedenborg was one who loved God with all his mind, who lived in the thought of God's presence in all things, to whom Nature and life were a manifestation of God. So, too, was Spinoza, the "God-intoxicated man," as Schleiermacher called him, living in loneliness, poverty, obscurity, but thinking of God all day long. So, too, among the Greeks was Plato, whose vast religious influence has been felt among serious thinkers down to our times. These men loved God with their mind, and the grace of God came to them through their thoughts. Science, too, in our day is growing deeply religious. It occupies itself with the methods of divine creation, with questions of universal law. Passing from the observation of unrelated facts, which was the method of the last century, it advances to larger speculations as to the whence and how.

We have seen three ways by which the grace of God comes, creating piety. By a sense of a divine presence mediated by sacraments and churches, and felt in the sympathy of religious meetings; by the influence of the heavenly love which was shown in the death of Jesus, and which has power to purify the soul from evil; and by that experimental knowledge of God which results from religious thought and intellectual inquiry. Now, we ask, Is there any other way by which we can enter into the love of God; by which practical men, immersed in business, yet desirous of not losing the religious life, wishing to see and know and serve God, can also enter into his love? There are great numbers of men who cannot, or at least do not, become pious in any of the previous ways. They do not enjoy rituals or take delight in ceremonial religion. Nor do they believe in the religion of sympathy or get any good from revival meetings. They are accustomed to stand firm on their feet, and are not carried away by excitement or emotion. Nor do they enter into the experiences of those who make Christianity a question of the salvation of the individual soul, of sin and pardon. They are conscientious men, who have always meant to do right. They know, to be sure, that they have done wrong things, but they are sorry for them, and they believe that God will forgive them, just as they forgive any one who has injured them and is sorry for it. Nor are they religious thinkers, spending

their time in meditation on God, duty, and immortality. They are doing the work of the world. Is there any kind of piety which they can have, or are they to be always left, as they have been usually left, to work without the inspiration and joy which come from the sense of God's love in what they do?

4. *Piety from Work.* I answer that I believe there is still another way in which God's love is brought to man. I believe that *work* also can be a sacrament by which the divine grace may be mediated; that love may descend into the soul by means of labor; that duty may be the step upward into piety; that we may be led by God while engaged in our daily work, and that what is often called mere morality may be the natural way to an inward spiritual life.

Thus may the grace of God which brings salvation come to those who are seeking to serve their fellow-men. Work may lead us into prayer. We may learn to pray, not as a duty, not as a sentiment, not from sympathy, not for our own salvation, not by an intellectual piety, but because we need the help of God to enable us to fulfil our duties to others.

There is work which can be done, perhaps, without prayer, — mechanical work, routine work, which is done with the hands alone. But whenever an occasion occurs in which we work to help others, but do not know how; in which we ought to do some-

thing for them, but are unable to do it aright; then we may throw ourselves on the help of God. We may say to God, "My Father, I am here, ready to do anything I can; show me how to do it." And by some sure but mysterious law the way is opened, the help comes. We see that as faith leads to work, so also work may lead to faith.

This is a form of piety which is to be; a Christ who is to come. It is piety coming from work as a sacrament; the religious form of duty. And I think it will be in some respects higher and stronger, deeper and more thorough, than the sentimental piety of the church, the emotional piety of the revival meeting, the salvation piety of the Calvinist, or the intellectual piety of the religious thinker. It will be loving God with all our strength. The moment we undertake any really Christian work we need this kind of piety. Here, for instance, is a young girl who takes a class in a Sunday school. She desires not merely to hear the children repeat lessons from the Bible, but to lead them to God. She wishes to impart to their souls some principle by which they can be kept safe amid all the trials and temptations which may come. How can she ever do such a great work? She feels wholly inadequate to the task. She is discouraged when she thinks of it. Therefore she may very likely give it up, and say she is not fit to be a teacher, that she does not know how, that she is not good enough, and the like. But suppose she believes

that whenever we wish to do any Christian work, any good for others, some power will come to us if we ask it. Then, instead of giving up her class of children, she will ask of God before each meeting that he will help her to do them real good; and if she finds that this prayer is always answered, she will go on with increasing courage and faith.

Let us suppose another is asked to be a visitor to the poor. This, also, is a difficult duty. To go as a friend, not as a patron; to help, and not to harm; to make them feel that you are a brother or a sister, not an official visitor; to say the right thing, the wisest thing, to put a new spirit of faith, hope, cheer, confidence into their hearts, — who can do this by any power of his own? But if we believe that there is a divine law, working as regularly as the laws of physics and chemistry, by which a prayer for help to enable us to do good will give us power which we should not have unless we prayed, then we can go to any task, however difficult, with courage and faith.

How we shrink from seeing one in some terrible distress, — some one on whom an awful calamity has fallen! We say, "What can I do? I can do nothing." But if we believed that God would certainly give us power to say the right word, to pour life and comfort into that bruised heart, and if we asked for such power, we should go instantly and cheerfully, because we should go relying wholly on him.

Clergymen are often called to the dying or the bereaved. Once I hesitated, lest I should not find the best words of comfort. Now I know that the right thing will be given. At such times we may trust in the Master's promise, "Take no thought what to say or speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye ought to say."

Jesus says, "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it. Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." Again he says that God will give all things when we ask in the name of Christ. Now, to "ask in the name of Christ" is certainly not merely to use the word "Christ." It is not to say, "We ask it through Jesus Christ." It is to ask in the spirit of Christ. But the spirit of Christ is that which does good to others. When we wish to do good to others, we are in the spirit of Christ. If then we pray for power to help others, we are praying in the name of Christ. Then we may ask what we need, and be sure that it will be given. Some power, some faith, some love, some wisdom will come to us, to enable us to help others.

Thus may piety be born of duty, and work be a sacrament, helping us to come into the love of God. All the other methods of piety are good, but perhaps this may be the best of all. The piety is good which comes to the human soul through churches and worship; through sympathy and communion; through the sense of sin and the sense of forgiveness; through intellectual aspiration scaling the

heights of universal law. But possibly the best of all may be the faith born of work, the piety which comes through duty, the prayer which is made for power to help our fellow-men.

Piety which is born out of morality will have this advantage. It will be nearer than any other to prayer without ceasing. As these Christian duties meet us, not on Sunday only, but all through the week, this will be a piety for all the working hours of life. As we see the results of this prayer, our faith will continually grow stronger.

This prayer will bring us near to Christ as well as to God, for it will be the result of work done for Christ as well as for God. It will be natural, rational, and practical. We shall pray just as we work, because there is something to be done which cannot be done well without prayer. This piety will be for men as well as for women, and we shall no more hear it said that religion is excellent for one half of the human race and not for the other. The prayer of action will balance and fulfil the prayer of sentiment. It will be more universal than any other, for all persons are called to do Christian work, but not all men are sacramentally inclined; not all are able to believe in the atonement; not all are disposed to sympathetic religion; not all are made for philosophical piety.

Finally, this piety which comes from daily Christian work will tend to develop the highest form of Christian character. For it makes religion not a

separate part of life, but an inspiration of the whole; not a sentimental feeling appropriate to Sundays and churches, but a vitalizing power creating love, thought, and action all the time. It gives a well-rounded character, in which action and love, morality and piety, works and faith, are harmonized and made one. It makes the natural life also supernatural; it brings down heaven to earth and lifts earth to heaven.

Some men do not incline to sentimental piety, nor to sacramental piety, nor to the piety of creeds, excitement, and revivals. They do not easily accept the piety of atonement and expiation, which loves God because of one's personal salvation from death and destruction. They have not much taste for philosophical or mystical piety. But they are well fitted for the piety which is born out of daily duty; for the prayer uttered when occasion arises, and not as a form or ceremony. They are constituted for this kind of religion, and I hope that through them may come another sight of divine love acting through steadfast law, — that influx of life which comes into every soul that seeks strength for it. This will be an influence from God to revolutionize the world. Then will the love of God and the love of man be seen to be one, and the whole Christian life be formulated in four blessed words, — from God, for man!

No doubt all these forms of piety are meant to be united. The time will come in which we shall

meet God in the church and also in the street; in the communion of saints and in the loneliness of the agony of the Garden; in the depths of spiritual thought, and the daily life of duty. All will be steps of Jacob's ladder leading up to heaven, on which the angels of God will go up to carry prayers and come down to bring blessings.

XVI.

WHAT WE POSSESS AND WHAT WE OWN.

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"If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

THE doctrine of the New Testament is, that man is a steward, not an owner, of his possessions. His powers, faculties, opportunities, time, wealth, are talents confided to him, for which he is to give an account. The joys of this life do not belong to us; we are never sure of them. God may resume them at any moment. We possess them, but do not own them.

By "being faithful in that which is another's" is, therefore, plainly meant "being faithful as stewards of what God lends us." But what, then, is meant by the last clause of the text, "Who shall give you that which is your own?" If we are only stewards of our possessions, do we own *anything?* What is meant by "that which is our own"?

I answer that what we possess is outside of ourselves, and not necessarily ours; what we own is

within, a part of the soul, and is ours. What we possess is, in its very nature, transient; what we own is, in its very nature, permanent. We possess our bodily health, but we do not own it; for it may leave us at any moment. We possess wealth, but do not own it; for it may take wings and fly away. We possess time, we do not own it; for it passes away from us in a steady current. We possess fame, power, influence; and these also may be taken from us suddenly and entirely. But we own our convictions, rooted in personal knowledge; we own our character, formed by faithful struggle, self-denial, loyalty to right, obedience to God. We own the faith which resists all doubts and all trials; the hope which grows more vigorous as the body dies; the love which unites us permanently to God and man. Talents God lends us for a time; but these are gifts which he bestows and gives forever. And they are sent as the result of our fidelity. Such is, I think, the meaning of the motto quoted above.

This becomes more clear if we consider the passage which precedes it, of which this statement is the conclusion and moral. Jesus had been telling his disciples the story of the unjust steward. The steward had neglected his master's interest, and wasted his property; had been detected, and was to be removed from his office. So he determined to make use of his power while he had it, to procure himself advantages after he should have lost it.

He allowed his master's debtors to cut down the amount of their debts fifty per cent in some cases, twenty per cent in others, with the understanding that they would repay him for this afterward, sharing with him the amount of which they had cheated his master. There is nothing strange in this part of the transaction. It has a remarkably modern air. It was one of those operations by which officials have cheated their governments in all time. It seems from the parable that this trick was understood in the first century as well as in the nineteenth. We know that, of the taxes levied by the ancient Romans in the provinces, only a small part ever found its way into the treasury; the rest was stolen by the tax-gatherers and the prætor. So it is in India, so in Russia, to-day. The same trick was practised in New York by Tweed and his companions, who allowed the contractors for the city to send in enormous bills, a large part of which, when paid, they took themselves. The same plan is pursued by the lobby to Congress and to State Legislatures, paying with stock those who will vote for their enterprises.

But why should the master who had been plundered commend the steward who robbed him? This is a more difficult question; yet he may have commended prudence, while he condemned the fraud. Prudence, which uses present opportunities to secure future good, is right. The prudence was right, the knavery was wrong. And the point of

the parable is, that we ought to put as much prudence, ingenuity, and cleverness into doing right as rogues use in doing wrong.

It has often been the case that while knaves have been ingenious, adroit, and skilful in their rascality, good people have gone in a blind and helpless way about their good works. It is a sort of proverb that religious people are easily imposed upon, that they have little knowledge of the world or of human nature. If their purpose is right, they are contented. They are very apt to adopt this want of judgment as a rule, and to say, "Do right, and leave the result to God." But since the Lord has given brains to good people as well as to bad people, why not use them? Once in a great while we find a man, like Dr. Franklin, who is as adroit in doing right, as sagacious in doing good, as knaves are in doing wrong. He discovered ingenious ways of helping those who were in need. Charitable people often give in a way to create more suffering than they relieve. Philanthropists go blindly on their way; patriots rush forward, inconsiderate of obstacles; religious people have a zeal for God, without knowledge. But Jesus, by many methods, taught his disciples that they ought not only to be as harmless as doves, but also as wise as serpents. With the devotion of martyrs, ready to die for their cause, they must join the utmost caution and good sense in working for it. They must, before attempting any work, count the cost, to see if they should be able to

finish it. It is not enough to *mean* to do good; we must *do* it. Conscience, which only wishes to save its own soul, may say, "I will do right, and leave the result to God;" but love, which desires to help its neighbor effectually, puts mind, as well as heart, into its work. It acts like the good Samaritan, who did not merely bind up the poor man's wounds, and then leave him; but put him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, took care of him there, and, when he went away, made arrangements to have him provided for as long as he needed further help. We do not want a blind, fanatical philanthropy, but a sagacious philanthropy and a sagacious patriotism, which keeps to its end, but carefully considers the means.

I have heard prudence called "a rascally virtue." Jesus did not so regard it. And I think that when he meant to inculcate prudence he chose a bad wise man for an example and not a good wise man, that we might see that it was simply the wisdom that he was commending; that prudence in itself was a good thing. In point of fact, folly joined with conscience often does more harm than sagacity united with sefishness. What an amount of harm has been done by well-meaning persons who did not stop to consider; by blind zealots, doing wrong with the best intentions; blind bigots, meaning to serve God by persecuting their neighbor; inquisitors, conscientiously cruel, paving hell with good intentions. Alas! it is still true, as it was when Jesus said it,

"that the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." If Herod and Pilate wish to crucify Jesus, they make up their quarrels, and join forces. But if Christians wish to put down the sins of Boston, then, instead of joining forces, they divide into numerous sects and spend a large part of their time in attacking each other.

Jesus illustrates this principle by showing what a mistake is made by many persons in the use of money; how they are cheated by it, and do not get the real good out of it that they might. This is something we possess, but do not own; but it may be used so as to give us something which we shall retain always. The widow who put her two mites into the treasury changed them into an everlasting possession, — self-content, peace of mind, consciousness of doing right. A person who sacrifices some pleasure he would enjoy, in order to give pleasure to another, changes a transient gratification into a permanent power of character. A man who is faithful, upright, perfectly honest in his business where custom might allow him not to be so, where few would think worse of him for not being so strict, — he also gives up a transient gain for a permanent habit of soul. This is what Jesus means by saying, "Make yourselves friends of the unrighteous Mammon, so that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." "Mammon of unrighteousness" means here "deceitful riches;" that which

seems to be what it is not, professes to do more for us than it can.

If we are faithful in that which is another's, God will give us that which is our own. Fidelity in transient insignificant work leaves a heavenly savor in the soul. Fidelity is the root out of which good and great things grow. It does not seem much. We are only asked to be true to our engagements, to stand fast to our professions, to keep our word; then we are trustworthy. That is what all can do, but how few do it! What want of fidelity in common work; how few men do their day labor as though God saw them! How many can be trusted in trade not to take small advantages of the ignorance of the purchaser? Here is where fidelity comes in. When we find a man who is faithful in these small things, we find one who is fit to be ruler over many things. This makes the sterling character, the honorable citizen, the one on whom men depend and know that their trust will never be betrayed. These men are the salt of the earth, without whom society would soon become corrupt and dissolve.

Business life, which is full of temptation to insincerity, has sometimes an opposite influence. It often educates men to fidelity. If the great majority of men did not usually keep their engagements, business could not be carried on. There is a code of business honor which to many educates to truth in other things. To such men, business is a

religious education. When I travelled in Italy, I found that the common people, though they would take every advantage of one in a bargain, yet, the agreement being once made, would keep to it loyally. I have heard the same thing of the Arabs. The idea of fidelity to one's engagements is often found where we least expect it. It is a sort of sheet-anchor holding the soul to truth amid the wreck of many virtues.

Fidelity in seeking for the truth, honesty in uttering it, leads to knowledge. The power of seeking for truth is what we possess, but when it gives us knowledge, that is something which we own. Life is not meant to be a perpetual seeking and never finding. We come at last, by faithfulness to the truth, to know God, duty, and immortality. There are some convictions which go down so deep into the human heart that they remain and cannot pass away.

We begin by believing in God, but we come at last to know God. That belief in God which only rests on what we have heard and been told, or on speculation and argument, is liable to be disturbed and changed. We possess it, but do not own it. But if we are faithful to that belief, and live by it, it will grow at last into knowledge. If we live as we believe, we at last know.

Jesus said, "Whosoever will do the will of God, shall know of the doctrine." We grow up by fidelity into knowledge. We do not acquire knowledge

by thinking, but by living; and if we use well the little knowledge we have, we receive more.

Consider the case of Laura Bridgman, a child blind, deaf, and dumb; shut out from the world by having all the usual avenues of thought closed. One only sense remained, that of touch. But by the genius and fidelity of her teacher this one sense became a broad highway through which light came to her soul, by which love entered in and went out, by which she found friends, amusement, joy, work, thought. By this one sense of touch she came to the knowledge of God, to faith in him and in Christ, to a hope of an immortal heaven, where she will have her eyes and ears opened, and be admitted into a full vision of God's world.

Meantime, how many of us there are, to whom God has lent eyes and ears and tongue, who have not used them so as to get any real knowledge of him. We have eyes, and look on the glories of the world, on the beauty and grandeur of Nature, and do not see God in it. We have ears, and hear the music of the universe, and remain insensible to it. God speaks to us each day by the voices of affection, and our hearts remain cold and dead. Meantime, this poor woman, shut in the inner prison of a world perfectly silent and wholly dark, has come to see, and hear, and know the best truths that can be known.

It is not so much opportunity as fidelity which conducts to the greatest results. The ships with

which the Northmen discovered Iceland, Greenland, and the coast of Massachusetts were not much larger than our pilot boats. The apparatus with which Faraday made his discoveries was of the simplest sort. Ferguson became a great astronomer by lying on his back in the sheep-pastures, measuring the distances of the stars with beads strung on a thread. Thus fidelity in a little leads to knowledge of much.

This year hundreds and perhaps thousands of people will go to Europe, to Colorado, to California. They will see mountains, cathedrals, works of art, ruins; but whether they gain any knowledge out of what they see will depend not only on their opportunity, but also on their fidelity. They may see all these things as we see things in our dreams, and bring away nothing. Meantime, the person who loves truth and Nature will go out into the fields close to his house, and there find wonders and beauties sufficient for the study of a lifetime. Every little brook which creeps through the meadow is full of wonders of life. Every cloud that drifts past, has lights and shadows more tender than any artist can copy. Every sunrise in New England is more full of wonder than the pyramids, — every sunset more magnificent than the Transfiguration. Why go to see the Bay of Naples, when we have not yet seen Boston harbor? Why go to the Paris Exposition, when we have close to us manufactories of all kinds, with the most curious machinery?

If you wish to see one of the greatest wonders of modern times, go some night into the cellar under one of our newspaper offices, and observe the half-reasoning printing-press throwing off its tens of thousands of copies of the journal which is to be laid on your breakfast-table in the morning. He who faithfully notices what is close at hand is the man who gains knowledge, and not he who looks for it on the other side of the world.

As with knowledge, so with love. The simple, natural affections are the steps by which we ascend to the largest love. Kindness in little things, a pleasant word when we can say it, a good-natured act when we can do it, — these are conditions by which we reach large generosities. These little opportunities come and go every day; we possess them, but cannot keep them. But they may be used so as to leave behind what shall be always ours, — a habit of kindness, a temper of good-will, a disposition to see and say the best we can of human kind.

The greatest soul and the largest heart that ever lived on earth had for friends some of the simplest men and women. How he loved those disciples, and loved them to the end, educating them by slow degrees to comprehend a little of his thoughts, hopes, and purposes! Yet what a gulf remained between his mind and theirs! He could not make them understand the spiritual nature of his kingdom, the probability of his death, the rising from the dead into a higher life. But still he loved them,

—the unstable, impetuous Peter, the sceptical Thomas, the fiery-hearted John; Martha, Mary, Lazarus, Mary Magdalene. He loved these undeveloped minds; for his greatness enabled him to perceive in them the capacity which no others could discover, of becoming at last his apostles, missionaries, and martyrs. The wisdom of this world would have said that those ignorant fishermen were the last persons to establish a religion for the civilized world. But he found in their present fidelity a guarantee of their future power. They were faithful in a few things, and could become rulers over many things.

And what he beheld in them, God sees in us. We, also, are weak, ignorant, full of errors, faults, and sins. We have faults of temper, faults of character; we are careless, or selfish, or forgetful of our duties. But if we are trying to be faithful, if we are beginning to do what is right, God finds in that small beginning a power which his grace will help to unfold into perfect truth and love. If we are faithful in that which is another's, he will give us that which is our own.

It has been usual for preachers to speak of the temporal things which pass away as though they were therefore worthless. But they are of infinite worth if they are the means of reaching that which shall abide. If we can change time into eternity, wealth into generosity, thought into knowledge, opportunities which are soon gone into faith, hope,

and love which abide, then riches, talents, and all outward visible things have a divine value. That which can become an infinite good is itself almost an infinite good. We will not, then, despise these things which God lends us because they are not yet our own. We will bless Him for the tranquil joys of every day, the simple affections of time, the common every-day work of life, the springs and summers which come and go, the talents we have and use, the business we transact, for all are parts of that Jacob's ladder which reaches from earth to heaven.

Oh, my heart, learn to love God through his works! Love the infinite truth and perfect beauty in the universe and in human lives, through the finite duties of each passing hour. Love all that is good here, and so love the infinite goodness here and beyond. Look away from darkness to light. Seek the best things in all God's children, by whatever name they may be called. Respect and love goodness, wherever it may be, and believe that all the goodness in thyself and in others must come down from the Supreme Goodness and lead back to Him. Turn away, O my soul, from all things false, base, and mean; rise and look up to the pure and perfect heaven of truth, which hangs its deep canopy of blue above us, unsoiled by the passing cloud; the home of the eternal stars; the highway of the majestic sun; the emblem of a divine purity and an illimitable peace.

XVII.

WHAT WILL MAKE US GENEROUS?

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I THINK I may assume that we all wish to be generous, for certainly no one would willingly be selfish. If I had treated of some other form of disinterested love; if, for example, I had selected for my topic, "How can we make ourselves pious?" or "How can we make ourselves philanthropic?" the case would be different. I could not assume that we all desire to be pious, for piety has been connected in many minds with disagreeable associations. That which is called piety is sometimes gloomy and morose; sometimes narrow, bigoted, sectarian, and intolerant; sometimes, alas! it is found in company with sharp bargains in business and mean habits of life. This, of course, is not real piety, for that is simply love to God and man, and cannot be gloomy, narrow, or mean. But since professional piety is sometimes associated in our minds with these poor qualities, I will not use this word here, but take one unsoiled by such associations. Besides, there are no pious people in Scrip-

ture. Pious is not a Bible word. The Bible says "godly" and "holy," not "pious." And the only place where the noun "piety" appears, is where the Apostle says that widows had best show their piety at home in their own family. "Philanthropy" also is a word which has been a little discredited; many people thinking of a kind of professional philanthropy which is not exactly loving and lovely, but mechanical. But no one, I think, has any disagreeable associations with the word "generosity;" therefore I take that as my theme.

What *is* generosity? It is not merely giving to others what we possess. A person who gives only five cents may be generous in his bounty; one who bestows five thousand dollars may not be so. When Mr. Bates presented his first fifty thousand dollars for our public library, he did a noble action, a wise action, and one which has resulted in a vast deal of good; but we cannot with strict accuracy apply the term "generous" to it, for it cost him no self-denial, and he had money enough left. A man may be very liberal without being very generous. I do not wish to disparage such liberality, for it is not a very common virtue. I wish we had more of it. I wish we had more men and women willing so to use their wealth, and thus procure the greatest amount of good out of it every day for themselves and others; to build for themselves a memorial in human lives benefited and blessed by such bounty. What mausoleum,

however splendid, can compare with the monument which will long preserve the memory of the man who established the Lowell lectures in Boston? Those lectures have elevated the whole tone of this community, have often given a new object in life, and inspired with the love of knowledge many a youthful mind.

Nor is generosity that constitutional sympathy which takes an interest in persons who are near us, and warms to the latest tale of sorrow. Such a sentiment is indeed very lovely, and always brings comfort with it. The sympathy of others is a great consolation in trouble. But this may be only a sentiment, an emotion, which begins and ends with the hour. Generosity is more than that. It gives itself, its own thought, power, ability, love, to the good of others. It enters into their needs; thinks for them; remembers them when absent; makes sacrifices willingly for their sake. It denies itself for others, and says nothing about its self-denial. It keeps no account of its sacrifices or of its bounty. Its joy is in giving; it is only happy when making some one else happy. As it is the nature of the fish to swim, and of the bird to fly, so it is the nature of the generous man to give, hoping for nothing again. Generosity has something boundless, unlimited, infinite, in its quality. It is like the sun, which evermore pours out its abundant light and heat, without asking what becomes of them. Where does the sun obtain these stores

of radiance and of fire? No one knows. Science has never been able to answer the question, except by uncertain conjectures. Nor can one tell from what inexhaustible fountains the generous man obtains the perennial light which cheers life around him. He does not create it; he merely lets it shine before men, so that others, seeing his good works, may glorify, not him, but his Father who is in heaven.

How, it may be said, can there be such a thing as cultivating our generosity? The essence of generosity is love, and we cannot create love by an effort. This is a difficulty which many feel. We know that we ought to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. But how can we make ourselves love from a sense of duty? How can we love by a resolve of the will? We can, by an effort, perform the outward action; but how can we cause ourselves to take pleasure in doing good?

This objection is well founded. No one can love from a sense of duty, or by a direct effort. And yet we ought to love; we ought to forget ourselves in generous actions. That is the paradox. We ought to do what we are unable to do. How are we to solve this difficulty?

Our answer is this: What we cannot do directly we may do indirectly; what we cannot do at once, we may do by degrees; what we cannot do by ourselves, we may do by the help of God and by the

influences he sends. If he makes it a duty to love him and to love others, we may be sure there is some way by which we can do it.

What a dreadful thing it is not to love! The unloving man lives utterly alone; he comes into union with none of his race. He is among them, but not of them. Always there is some barrier between his heart and theirs; there is no approach, no contact. His soul is lonely, in a dreary solitude. What a hell of despair is in the word "egotism"! The man who is an egotist, who is always thinking of himself, is dead while he lives. There is no joy, no sunshine, in his heart. All there is icy cold. Only when we love we really live. We may say, in one word, "Love is heaven, and selfishness is hell, here and hereafter."

That we only really live while we love something outside of ourselves — while we are in communion with Nature, truth, man, God — is a fact which philosophy recognizes no less than religion. The self-absorbed man is only half alive. He who is always thinking of himself, his good qualities and merits, his rights and his wrongs, his successes and failures; he who is seeking for praise, who thinks of his reputation, who watches his own shadow, is really losing the bread of life, and being starved at the centre of his soul. The ancients fabled that Narcissus by always looking at himself in a spring, and admiring his own beauty, pined away and died. The moral is obvious.

Whatever takes us out of ourselves in a genuine interest in God's great world around us is a source of new and generous life. A hearty devotion to others is generosity.

The first way, then, to make ourselves generous is to look at the good in things about us. This is one great advantage of education. True education is not that which loads the memory with dead facts, but the discipline which makes all truth interesting. The moment we are interested in any truth we forget ourselves. Even Byron, the great egotist of modern times, forgot himself when he thought of the solemn desolation of Rome.

A liberal education is that which frees a man from himself. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." No one is so much a slave as the man who is tied by his own appetites, ambitions, vanities, conceit.

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage.
> If I have freedom in my love,
> And in my thoughts am free,
> Angels alone that soar above,
> Enjoy such liberty."

I have heard of a person who in a great and overmastering sorrow sought comfort in the study of mathematics. Mr. Emerson commends the sight of the everlasting stars in their majestic stability to

tranquillize the turbulent spirit. The beauty of nature takes us out of ourselves, and soothes the soul with the presence of a divine beauty. Who that in our New England Octobers has seen the glory of the woods, their golden yellows, their rich crimson, the contrast of the deep-blue heaven with the gorgeous coloring of the earth, but has been lifted above himself? Dr. Channing was once driving with a lady by the shore of the ocean. The lady said, "Oh, Dr. Channing, how small we seem in view of all this!" Dr. Channing replied, "When I am in such a presence as this I do not think of myself at all!" This is the real office of Nature, to free us from all small egotism by bringing us into communion with infinite beauty and wisdom.

But a still better consolation in our sorrow comes to us when we find something to do for others. To do any good work enlarges the heart. Our own misfortunes sometimes lead us to sympathize with others as we could not do before we had ourselves suffered. So Wordsworth says: —

> "A deep distress has humanized my soul."

When we are able to do good to any one we begin to love him. We like those who are kind to us, but we like better those to whom we are kind. Our own hearts will be enlarged when we each day endeavor to make some one else happier. This is the secret of inward peace. Jesus went about doing good. He did not stay at home and wait till

some one asked for help, for he came to seek, as well as save, those who needed aid. His kindness was active, not passive. He took the initiative. Doing good is an excellent way of gaining good. When you wait till you are asked before you help any one, you are thrown into a condition of resistance. When you give, how often it is done "grudgingly and by necessity"! But God loves a cheerful giver; and so do men love a cheerful giver, one whose heart goes with his hand.

This means that we should be not only generous in action, but also generous in thought; that we should take the trouble to think about others, to enter into their state of mind, to learn how to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. How thankful we are to those who try to understand us; who enter lovingly into our state of mind; who divine the secret of our capabilities and defects; who encourage us to do better, and show us what we are able to accomplish! There are people who only think about themselves; but, thank God, there are also those in the world who think about others, — not to find fault, not to censure and condemn, but to comfort, encourage, and strengthen.

Such persons we have all known. I was once preaching in a small town in Central New York, and I described in my sermon a good woman whom I had once known in a distant State. She was the wise friend and helper of all in the town who were

in any trouble or want. Young and old went to her with their difficulties, sure of finding some help. Her very presence seemed to bring sunlight, she lived in such an atmosphere of serene wisdom and goodness. She was a mother in Israel, spending her life in thinking of others. If any were lonely and neglected, she noticed their solitude, and contrived some way of bringing them into the society they needed. If any youth or maiden seemed in danger of being misled by foolish companions, she ingeniously arranged some plan for counteracting these snares, and interesting them in better things. And why should there not be ingenuity and contrivance for good ends as well as for evil ones? When Jesus told the story of the unjust steward, he pointed the moral by saying that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. Good people are too often satisfied with having good intentions, and they let the result take care of itself. But Jesus said, "Be wise as serpents;" and Paul said, "Do not fight as one who beats the air." So this good woman of whom I spoke hit on ingenious expedients for helping her friends and neighbors. And after I had finished this description, a gentleman living near the place came to me and said, "I was not aware that you ever knew our good Miss Mappa, but you described her exactly." I had not known her, and I was making a portrait of another person in a distant place; but I found there were

two good women of the kind; and if two, why not twenty? why not many more? Such people, wherever they may be found, are in their own homes and neighborhood wells of refreshment to the weary and forlorn, full of heavenly intelligence, charitable ingenuity, skilful devices for doing good.

Let us put our mind into some work by which those about us would be made better and happier. If every day we took the trouble of thinking about the best interests of others, we should find ourselves growing in generosity. A man in the Boston Post-Office once said to me: "I have not a great deal to spend in charity, and I have considered how I could make it go furthest. Noticing how many persons lose their letters by the postage being unpaid or insufficiently paid, I make my charity consist in paying the postage on such letters and sending them to their address. Thus by paying one or two cents I may sometimes keep an important communication from going to the Dead Letter Office. Some poor mother, perhaps, gets the letter from her son which she would otherwise lose." I thought this a piece of benevolent contrivance worth imitating. I had another friend who habitually sent newspapers such as we read and throw away, to persons in different parts of the country, who were made happy by receiving them. He had a list of young men and women who had gone from New England to work or teach,

in Tennessee or Colorado, and he selected such journals as he thought would help them — to the teachers, some journal of education; to the Episcopalian or Baptist young woman, some paper of her own denomination. This is what Jesus meant by the wisdom of the serpent, — to think about the best way of being useful, and to put one's mind into it.

It is not by doing some one important thing at long intervals that we become generous, but by practising small acts of generosity every day. Many small transgressions make the habit of evil; many small words or acts of kindness create the habit of goodness. Action and reaction are equal in morals as well as in physics. Do a kind action, and it makes you feel kindly. Let us have

> "A sense of an earnest will
> To help the lowly living,
> And a terrible heart-thrill
> When we have no power of giving.
> An arm of aid to the weak,
> A friendly hand to the friendless,
> Kind words — so short to speak —
> But whose echo is endless.
> The world is wide, these things are small,
> They may be nothing, but they are all."

Wordsworth says that the largest portion of a good man's life consists in his "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." It is not the amount we do, but the spirit in which we act, that is the important matter.

And this spirit comes to us from on high. Religion consists in looking to the divine beauty and generosity which is above us. The cynical man looks down with contempt on what he thinks below himself. The religious man looks up with adoration to higher and nobler generosity in man and in God, and so he grows into the likeness of what he contemplates. This is the way in which Paul describes the influence of Jesus on the soul. He tells us that the goodness of Jesus is a kind of mirror in which we see the goodness of God, and that the more we look into that mirror, the more we become like Christ and God. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to greater glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." That is another way of becoming generous,—by associating with generous people, contemplating noble lives, beholding the generosity of Christ and the bounty of God, and so imbibing something of that spirit.

In order to enter heaven hereafter we must enter heaven here; and heaven is the condition of a generous soul. I am glad to see men of all denominations beginning to protest against the notion that Christianity consists in thinking how to save our soul from a future outward hell into a future outward heaven. One may be called Orthodox and another Unitarian, but these old lines are becoming a good deal blurred. They are fading out. It is encouraging to see so many taking

ground against the low and unworthy notion which makes of religion a talisman or charm by which to escape from the vengeance of God. It is time we put aside such pagan conceptions of the Deity. We are converted — so says Jesus — when we become as little children, laying away our pride and conceit, our egotism and selfish worldly aims. Then the love of God enters our hearts. And this new life is that which is always coming, not that which came long ago. Be truthful, honest, kind, and generous to-day, and trust God to take care of your soul to-morrow. Heaven is here, or it is nowhere. I should not say to a man, "Be religious, for you may die to-morrow," but rather, "Learn to love God and man, for you have to live to-day." We may enter heaven any moment by the eternally open doorway of faith, hope, and love. Trust in God as infinite goodness. Hope that he will make you altogether generous, pure, true, and good; and go out of yourself in loving thoughts for others, loving actions of good-will, loving words of sympathy. Be sure that the divine life is ready to be shed abroad in your heart this very hour. God's love is nearer to you than anything else in time or eternity.

XVIII.

POWER AND AIM.

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EMERSON somewhere tells us that "power and aim are the two halves of human felicity." There is a profound wisdom in this saying.

Power, without aim, leads nowhere, and tends to nullity. Aim without power does not accomplish what it proposes, and thus falls into discouragement, which is also nullity. Each, by itself, journeys toward nothingness. Together, they accomplish the wonders of time and eternity.

When, however, we speak of any grown-up human beings without an aim, we mean without one which is permanent and adequate. Every one, or nearly every one, has some purpose in view, some end in sight. Except the Neapolitan lazzaroni dozing on the shore of the Bay of Naples, or the dreaming poets, most persons are chasing something all day long, — pleasure, gain, power, distinction. But these purposes are not always blessed ones; they do not make a part of human felicity. They are well enough for a time, but not satisfactory

for a life. In the aim of life there should be something infinite, eternal; something carrying with it a touch of immortality and heaven. This infinite quality, with its hidden charm, belongs to duty, to love, to truth. This is the indivisible trinity to which all of life must tend in order to have any permanent interest or value. To do right because right is true and lovely; to seek truth in order that we may put it into action, and so help others; to be wisely generous, practically sympathetic, — this is the great aim which gives the soul an infinite content.

Some persons, however, have power without aim. Little children begin life so. They put forth inexhaustible energy in all directions. They are not meant to be tied to any one thing. Their supply of activity is so prodigious that they learn by everything they see and touch. They are making experiments all day long. Nature welcomes them into her friendly arms, and opens her wonderful pages for their delight and instruction. How sad to see the little things taken from their play-room and play-ground, where they learn at every moment, and chained to a bench or a book, where they learn next to nothing! On the other hand, it is doubtless inconvenient to have these restless little fingers scattering your work, overturning your furniture, breaking your ornaments, tearing leaves from your books. The golden mean is to be found in that benign discovery of modern thought, the Kinder-

garten; or, if that is not accessible, then we must make the nursery or primary school as much like a Kindergarten as we can. Give the children plenty to do in a natural way, and do not try to hold them too soon to a fixed purpose. They are lovely illustrations of power without aim.

But as soon as the children begin to grow up, this is no longer a childlike state, but a childish one. More and more of aim and purpose ought to come in, does come in, — outwardly imposed at first, that it may be self-imposed afterward. With children amusement and instruction go naturally together, amusement carrying with it instruction. Not so afterward. The young man or young woman, whose aim is amusement, grows weary. Amusement is not an adequate aim for a grown person. The novels of social life, which represent pretty accurately human affairs, show us men and women of pleasure as excessively weary; in fact, tired of life almost before they have begun to live. This is because their aim is not adequate to their power. It does not draw out their force; so they become vapid even to themselves. In this country we have been hitherto saved from this shallow class, which belongs to the wealthy capitals of Europe. It is the habit here for all men, rich and poor, to do some useful work. I hope we shall not soon have among us many of those imitators of foreign manners, who spend their time in dressing, looking out of the windows of club-houses, getting up an

imaginary fox-hunt, or driving, at much expense and with some difficulty, a useless four-in-hand stage-coach.

And yet, even among ourselves, how much wasted power there is, — misdirected power; power spent on inadequate aims, which might accomplish so much in nobler ways!

I am not one of those who think that money-making in itself is a bad thing. It is a good thing, for by its means come to society its outward improvements and opportunities. It is the *love* of money which is the root of evil, not money itself, nor money-making. But when the Apostle said, "The *love* of money is the root of all evil," I think he hardly exaggerated. To make money in order to use it, as the banker Peabody used his money, as Peter Cooper used his, and as so many other rich men and women have done and are doing, this is not "the love of money," it is the love of doing good. What large subscriptions and donations are being made every day in Boston for colleges here and in every other State of the Union; for the Indians in the Territories; the colored people in North Carolina and Georgia; for kindergartens, hospitals, missions, asylums! I happen to know of three or four great subscriptions going on at this moment, side by side, in our city. Those who have money and use it, — who use it for good ends, — are not those who love it. With them, power and aim are properly united.

We read in the newspapers every day the stories of men who, after long years of honest labor, have wrecked their character and brought untold misery to their homes by making haste to be rich. They have speculated with funds not their own, and lost them. Oh! they did not mean to lose; no doubt they meant to gain and to return the borrowed funds, — for they were only borrowed, not stolen. "He only steals," say they, "who takes what he does not mean to return." This is the new definition which is to replace the old one, "He steals who takes without leave what does not belong to him." It is not, therefore, rich people only who suffer from the love of money. The poor man who trusts in money, who means to be rich any how and in any way; who leaves his honest business to speculate; who grumbles and is angry because others accumulate faster than he, — this man, without a dollar in his pocket, loves money more than Peter Cooper did with his millions.

"Great powers and low aims" might be written as an epitaph on the tomb of many eminent public men and leading politicians. Their object is to rise, to become more distinguished, get a better place, make themselves popular, talk plausibly on either side of the question, fill their pockets with the people's money. Think of such men, and then of a statesman like Burke, a champion of freedom like Erskine, a patriot like Gambetta, a hero like Garibaldi, a leader like Kossuth. Think of our

own statesmen, — Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Hamilton, Webster, Sumner, — and then turn to the demagogues whose only purpose is to deceive the people by adroit cunning and amusing tricks; who sneer at reform, and imagine the salvation of the country to depend on the election of a popular or influential politician. A great training, splendid ability, and insignificant objects, — in this sentence is pronounced the decay and fall of many a reputation of our time. Only those who exert their powers for the good of the country will be remembered twenty years after death. Men of low aims, however brilliant, are often forgotten even in their lifetime.

An eminent warning of the nullity of vast powers with no sufficient aim is to be found in the case of the first Napoleon. No other man of such genius has appeared in our century. His faculties of observation, judgment, invention, divination, and his mental grasp, were almost preternatural. When planning a campaign, he saw the possibilities before him, the events which would occur, as other men see them after they have happened. In that one brain there was a power which more than outweighed the generalship and statesmanship of the rest of Europe. The "Code Napoleon" shows what he might have effected had he devoted himself to the improvement of France, the education of its people, the development of good institutions. Had he done this he might have carried forward

the civilization of Europe a hundred years, laid the foundation of a permanent peace among nations, shown how poverty, crime, intemperance, idleness could be reformed and cured. His genius was adequate to it all. Instead, he adopted the vulgar aim of a commonplace conqueror like Charles XII. or Frederick the Great, and his whole life-work passed out of sight in a single generation.

Another example of great mental power combined with low aims is that of Lord Byron. His poetic genius surpasses that of any other writer since the time of Milton. He joined with a miraculous command of language and control of verse the most tender and noble insight into the beauty of Nature and the experiences of life. His poetry was like the fountain of Helicon breaking afresh from the soil. But this majestic and lovely language and imagery is wasted on thoughts empty of value, or filled with a shallow scepticism. Byron believed in nothing, and therefore had nothing to say. His fame was like the Northern lights, which lighten up half of the heavens with columns of rosy fire and darting coruscations, but disappear when at dawn the true aurora arrives. But he who, like Milton, Wordsworth, Dante, has a high purpose, together with a great poetic fancy, illuminates long periods with his beneficent light.

Such is power without aim. What is aim without power? Alas! we see also examples enough of this; of those who choose objects for which they

are inadequate. Poets who do not know how to sing; literary people who cannot write. There are reformers who propose to save the world, but who have not force enough in them to reform themselves. There are many loud-voiced prophets of a new era who come before us professing to preach some new and everlasting gospel, but are not able to make themselves intelligible. They have not power even to explain what they mean, much less to convince men of the truth of what they say.

The beginning of the natural life in little children shows us power without an adequate aim. The beginning of the spiritual life in older persons often presents the opposite experience, — that of aim without adequate power. As soon as one endeavors seriously to do his duty, to love God and man, to follow Christ, to become a good man; that is, as soon as he adopts a truly divine and heavenly aim of living, he finds his powers are not equal to it. "The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." He means to do right, and does wrong. He makes good resolutions, and presently breaks them. "I see the better way, and approve it," said the Latin poet, "but I follow the worse." "I see then that when I would do good evil is present with me," responds the Jewish apostle. "I believe, O Cyrus," cried the Asiatic Araspes, "that I have two souls. When the good one prevails, it does noble things; when the bad one conquers, evil ones." Thus from various races of mankind comes the declaration of how

hard it is to keep up to the point of a high purpose, even when we have reached it. How easy to step backward; how easy to forget our good intentions!

What, then, shall we do about it? One of two things. Our power is not equal to our aim. That is the difficulty. We can then either let down our aim till it becomes equal to our power, or raise our power till it is equal to the aim.

The first method is that of numberless persons. When they find that "old Adam is too strong for young Melanchthon," they say, "Be not righteous overmuch; why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Do not try to be better than others. If one is as good as the average, that is enough." This way of thinking kills aspiration, hope, generous endeavor. We yield to the current and drift downward. The enthusiastic boy hardens into the worldly man. He laughs at the dreams of his youth. He sinks into habit, routine, and self-indulgence. That, I think, is not the best way out of the difficulty.

But how we reverence the man and the woman who take the other way. These are they who do not forget the dreams of their youth, — who are always advancing, always looking for something better and higher. As they grow old, the weight of years and cares is not heavier, but lighter. They take more cheerful, more hopeful views of the world's future. They grow more generous, more faithful, more tender, more true. Need I remind you of these good spirits? They are with us and

around us. They have power and aim both, — the two halves of human felicity. Their power is more full, their aim more sure. Emerson himself was one of these, and so was Longfellow. Both aimed at some divine truth, some heavenly beauty, a larger communion, a loftier life. And both had power to the last, to move and sway, to influence and attract, to lift others around them to a higher faith.

More than any other who ever lived, Jesus joined a perfect aim with a fulness of power. His life was devoted to help and save mankind from the lowest evils, and to raise the world to the highest plane. He had power from God to do this. God gave him the spirit without measure, and the result was a transformed humanity.

So the apostle Paul united power and aim. His life, also, was spent in incessant labors to spread the gospel of truth and love. And he did it with such power that he saw Christianity planted in Europe, and a religion begun there which would unite many races and nations in a common faith.

These, you may say, are men of genius, men of inspiration, exceptional men. But do you not know others, by no means exceptional, not great in the world's eye, but whose lives are given to good things? These are the simple, unpretending followers of Christ. They make no profession. They do not talk of their sacrifices; they find a pure joy in doing good. Their aim in life has become a part of themselves. They find it more blessed to give than

to receive. Their joy is in doing something, each day, kindly, helpful, sympathetic. And because they walk in love, they walk steadily and with an increasing power.

What is the secret of this continuous, uninterrupted goodness? It is faith, which works by love. It believes and trusts in the words of Jesus. "We are saved by faith," cried the Apostle, and it is still true that we are saved by faith. It is the trust that when God gives us a duty he will give us the power to do it. It is the trust that if we live in the spirit, we shall walk in the spirit; that is, if we surround ourselves with an atmosphere of good thoughts and purposes, we shall have power to carry them out into action. Jesus came to bring hope to the world. He came to teach us to feel ourselves little children in the universal arms of a divine compassion. He inspired this confidence in his disciples. They believed that God would give them all the power they needed while they trusted in him. And so they had it; and so we have it, when we also trust in God. It is only in our hours of doubt and despondency that we are weak. We think of the dear Christ, our Master, and look up, and God revives his work in the midst of the years.

When our purpose is to give, — to acquire things, not in order to keep them selfishly, but to communicate freely, — then to give is a joy. It is no longer a difficult thing to keep to this end; it

is never difficult to do what is pleasant. We may forget our intention, we may sink back into indolence or wilfulness; but when we look into ourselves we see that we have no peace within. Once more we realize that we belong to God and to Christ; that we are fellow-workers with Jesus; that he is here by our side, and that there can be nothing so lovely as to labor with him. Then the good aim comes back, and we know that power will come too.

When we hesitate before a task because it is difficult, and adjourn its performance, and begin to excuse ourselves, and say, "At a more convenient season I will begin it," we grow weak, and no such convenient season comes. But when we say, "Here is an opportunity of doing some good; I do not know how, but God is with me; he can help me; he can give me power and open the way,"—then how often the way is open; some good influence comes to help us. The difficulties disappear. The right words are given us. What seemed so hard is easy and pleasant. We discover that it is as true now as it was twenty-five centuries ago, that "those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

There is nothing formal about this sort of religion. It has nothing to do with creeds or ritual. It is a simple conviction that the law of the spirit of life is as Jesus said; that it is more blessed to give than to receive; that those who exalt themselves shall be abased, and those who humble themselves

shall be exalted; that all things work together for good to them that love God; and that with this aim before us, power will come to us. So we are afraid of nothing here or hereafter. We feel safe in the protection of infinite love.

In religion, power and aim are the two halves of goodness. The man who aims at goodness, but never succeeds, is not a good man. The powerful preacher, the great exhorter, the self-denying monk, who yet has not the spirit of Christ, is none of his. "Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not love, I am as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." The aim in Christianity is love; the power is faith. Those who seek to escape from selfishness and wilfulness into a large, honest, joyful generosity, must join with that a steadfast trust in the ever-present love. Then they have power. To doubt, to hesitate, to postpone, is to lose the occasion. Walk in faith toward love. Then you have the power and the aim together. Look beyond the things seen into the world of eternal realities, and put your trust in those, — in that eternal truth, eternal goodness, eternal wisdom, which enfolds all that seems weak, and surrounds all that seems low and evil. Trust in this, and power comes to you. So, the aim and the power being in harmony, there arrive joy and peace, hope and satisfaction.

XIX.

VIS INERTIÆ IN NATURE AND LIFE.

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IT happened to me, once, to be invited to visit one of the vaults filled with those large safes which are used in banks and elsewhere. I noticed the heavy steel doors by which they are closed and secured, and took hold of one of these doors and tried to move it. I had to exert a good deal of force, and even then I only succeeded in causing it to move quite slowly. But when I attempted to stop this motion, I found it equally difficult to do so. Though the heavy door was going very slowly, it required a considerable muscular effort to check its progress. I thus perceived that it takes as much power to stop such motion as it does to begin it.

This is a simple illustration of what physical science has called the *vis inertiæ*, or inert force. Sir Isaac Newton defined "inertia, or the innate force of matter," as "the power of resistance by which every material body endeavors to persevere in its present state, whether of rest, or of motion in a straight line." "But a body," he adds, "exerts

this force only when another force, acting on it, endeavors to change its condition." Newton also adds that this may be called "*vis inertiæ*, or force of inactivity," and that it really means the inactivity of the mass of matter.

But if it means inactivity, how can it be called "a force"? Is not "inert force" a contradiction in terms? It seems to be not force, but a power of retaining force. Inertia is the great storehouse of the forces of nature, and prevents their dissipation and loss.

If it were not for this power of inertia, the order of the universe could not be maintained. For without such a provision we could not rely on the continuity of the powers of gravity, magnetism, chemical action; there would be no guarantee for the movements of the planets in their orbits, for the return of day and night, summer and winter, for the growth of plants, the life of animals. "Conservation of force" is, in the last analysis, this mysterious law of inertia. The same law which governed the motion of the heavy steel door of the safe retains the sun and the stars in their places.

But this law of inertia, or "inert force," finds other applications and illustrations in the intellectual and moral world. There is a law of inertia in thought, which is the "conservation of intellectual force." It means that all real thought, all insight of truth, is a permanent possession, and cannot be lost. It may change its form, but it cannot be

destroyed. Bryant says of truth that "the eternal years of God are hers." Emerson tells us that

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world has never lost."

We are forever saying that "truth is mighty, and must prevail." This is one great hope for mankind, that every new truth, when once recognized, must enter into the life of the world, and contribute to its progress.

But let us remember that the same law which preserves truth once attained makes the difficulty in its first reception. Reformers are apt to be bitter against conservatives, and call them bigots because they resist so obstinately the new light. But the same inertia which makes it hard to move the steel door keeps it in motion after it has once begun to move. If truth were easy to receive, it would be easy to lose it again. This is a lesson which reformers are slow to learn; but they need it, in order to be patient and just to their opponents, and candid in their judgments. We must be willing to grant that the same love of truth which moves the reformer is the motive which refuses to yield easily or suddenly to his arguments. It is best that it should be so.

We may have some favorite measure which seems to us to contain the secret of all progress. It is the movement the time demands. It is perhaps the abolition of slavery, or of war, or of intemperance;

it is woman suffrage, free trade, civil service reform, a broader Christian faith, a rational Christianity. We cannot see why men do not accept our belief, and accept it now. We wish to have it embodied at once in the law of the land or in the creeds of the church. It seems so true and right and necessary that we think it intolerable not to have it at once received by mankind.

It is the law of inertia which stands in our way, and that is a most useful and beneficent law. It means that a vast amount of effort must be made to convince and convert men, before you can embody truth in institutions and laws. It means that the people must be educated to believe in the reform, otherwise it is of no use to enact it as a law. Passing a vote will not answer. Contriving to get a bare majority will not answer. Politicians want to carry the next election, and to carry it by any means, good or bad. But reformers have a much more difficult and important work. It is to change the convictions of the people, so that when the reform arrives it may come to stay. The same *vis inertiæ* which resisted it will then operate to maintain it. Slavery and its evils were discussed for thirty years, and then those evils had to be still more fully shown by the great rebellion and secession, before the people of the United States could be educated to the point of abolishing that pernicious institution. How often during those weary years the hearts of the anti-slavery reformers were chilled by dull opposition,

and their hopes cruelly disappointed! Like the souls under the throne, they cried, "How long, O Lord, how long!" But the result of it was that at last the whole people were brought to see that this institution cumbered the ground, and must be swept away. And so it went, never to return. Of all those who defended it as right and Christian, not one remains. No one, anywhere, wishes to have it back. None are so poor as to do it reverence.

Custom and imitation make a part of the *vis inertiæ* in morals. People do things because they have been accustomed to do them, and because others do them. Fifty years ago the Peace societies began to demonstrate the evils of war. More than thirty years ago I went, as a delegate from a church, to a Peace convention held in Paris, over which Victor Hugo presided, the object of which was to put an end to all war. To settle international disputes we proposed to have what Tennyson calls

"The Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."

All international quarrels were to be settled by laws passed by a Congress of Nations, and each case was to be decided under those laws by a High Court of Nations. We proposed, in fact, to apply to the States of Europe the principles of the American Union. Alas! since then, how many wars have sent desolation over the world! Every one admits the evil of war, but the power of custom is still too strong to be conquered. It seems now as if war

would come to an end by the intolerable magnitude of its burdens. The nations of Europe stagger under the weight of their enormous standing armies. The weapons of destruction are becoming so terrible that wars have become very short. If they continued longer, all the combatants would be destroyed. So it is that things must sometimes grow worse before they can be better. But when the time comes that some other way of settling disputes shall be found, wars will be abolished forever among civilized nations, — abolished never to return. The powerful *vis inertiæ* which has maintained them so long will act then with equal force to prevent them from ever coming back. The long delay will not have been lost, which was gradually educating the human mind to find a better method.

The same law of inertia applies to the development of character, to the correction of bad habits, to the formation of good ones. Young people are apt to suppose that they can, whenever they choose, leave off a wrong habit and form a right one, by merely taking a resolution. They discover that they have faults, and honestly desire to correct them. A young girl sees that she has a quick temper, that she is impatient, and she determines that she will henceforth never use a hasty or angry word. Having made this good resolution, she finds before the day is over that she has fallen into the same ill-temper as before, and said the same unkind things. So it is with other bad habits, — vanity,

untruth, self-indulgence, selfishness, passion. We resolve to break away from them, but the resolution has no apparent effect. Then we say, "It is of no use. I have tried in vain. I have resolved, and I have not been able to keep my resolution."

To a person who speaks thus I should say, "It is not only often true that you cannot conquer a bad habit by a resolution, but it is a good thing that you cannot do so. If a bad habit could be overcome in a moment by a single resolution, a good habit might be lost in a moment. If a man could change his character by a determination, that would show he had no character to change. But this does not prove that a resolution to do right is useless. A right purpose, a good determination, is an important step; it places us in the right direction."

The power of inertia in morals makes it difficult to begin, but easy to go on. The harder it is at first to form a good habit, the more sure we are that, when formed, it will last. The real difficulty is in the beginning. As we go on we acquire more power to keep in the right way. If the *vis inertiæ* in Nature is a good thing, being really an outcome of the larger law which preserves all the forces of the universe, why is not the *vis inertiæ* of the soul a good thing? Instead of being discouraged because it is hard to build up good habits and a good character, we ought to be thankful for this, as a sure evidence that when formed they will last.

What theologians have called natural depravity is, I suppose, only the *vis inertiæ* of the soul, the inert force waiting to be roused and turned in the right direction. The more innate power in any soul to do right, the greater is often the difficulty in its first efforts. That is why we so often read in the biographies of great saints, like Saint Augustine or Saint Francis of Assisi, that their early life showed no trace of the power of goodness which was in them. It was hard at first to move them toward goodness; but when they began to move nothing could arrest their progress.

One of the most upright, generous, brave souls of the last generation was Isaac T. Hopper. He was a man full of the energy of goodness; he had none of those "half virtues which the world calls best." Though as a man he was bold as a lion to defend the oppressed, the downtrodden, the fugitive, at any cost and risk to himself, when a boy he showed no such traits. He was self-willed, passionate, and hard to control. Out of a rugged and difficult soil sprang up one of the noblest characters.

Now I do not mean to fall in with the foolish fashion of describing "bad boys" as though they were to be admired. I do not consider a boy or a girl to be a fit subject for biography because indocile, impudent, and disobedient. I think the stories of this sort which we have, are false in their spirit and dangerous in their tendency. There is enough of impertinence and irreverence in American boys

already; such habits do not need to be cultivated. But what I believe is, that parents and teachers ought not to be discouraged because children may not be teachable or easily led while young, or because they resist the efforts made to impress good ideas upon their minds. These children, at first unmanageable, may have in them a fine inert force, which will afterward show itself in an admirable development of character. Surround them with love, lead them into truth, show them that you trust in them, and that you expect them to do right and be right. So you will retain their confidence, so you will prevent them from being discouraged, and eventually you may find their reluctance and resistance gradually changing into what you desire for them.

A remarkable illustration of what I have been saying is to be found in the "Autobiography of Anthony Trollope." Here was one who during the first seventeen years of his life seemed to be the most stolid and incapable of boys. He was almost as unpromising as Walter Scott, who was one of the dullest children of his generation. Trollope was at school twelve years, studying Latin and mathematics, and the result was that he did not know his multiplication table, and could not translate the easiest Latin sentence; his spelling and handwriting were both poor. Some more years he spent in the post-office, doing nothing but copying papers, and copying them badly. But all this turned out to be

the evidence not of stupidity, but of a vast inert power. As soon as he had a real opportunity, and was thrown on his own resources, he began to develop enterprise, determination, invention, and the most irresistible strength of purpose. He wrote and published several novels which were dead failures; but, undiscouraged, he went on till he achieved a success. Meanwhile he worked steadily in his business, and proved himself capable and useful in the post-office. The Latin language, which had defeated him at school, he attacked in manhood, and mastered it so well as to be able to read Latin books with pleasure. In this case we have an example of the law of inert force in the soul; powers hard to set in motion, but acquiring great momentum when once exerted.

But now you may ask, "How shall we change this inertia into active force? We have seen that a good resolution is not enough; a single effort is not enough. How shall those who find it hard to overcome mental torpor and moral sluggishness, weak purposes, bad habits, succeed in changing these into a forward and upward movement? What shall make us grow up, in all things, into the beautiful, the good, the true?"

The first step, evidently, is taken, when we feel the need of being different from what we are. So long as we are self-satisfied, there can be no progress. Plants grow without an effort, but the growth of the human soul requires the longing for something better,

or what a German poet calls "extraordinary, generous seeking." The old theology called this longing "the sense of sin," and considered it necessary to true conversion. Jesus calls it "a hunger and thirst after righteousness," — which I think is a larger definition. But it is plain that in some form this is the first step. We shall never improve much as long as we think we are good enough already.

The next step of moral progress is that of purpose, resolve, determination. But that this may not be a barren purpose or empty resolution, it ought to be taken, not in doubt or fear, but with hope and confidence. In order to succeed in anything, we must expect to succeed. We need hope; hope is the great motor in all progress. "But hope which is seen is not hope;" that is, our hope must have some motive beyond anything we already see in ourselves. And the great source of this hope is that which others have for us, — others wiser and better than we. The mightiest help we can give to others in an upward course is to hope for them. When the wise and good, out of a larger and deeper experience than ours, knowing all our faults, yet hope for us, then we begin to hope for ourselves.

The power of Christianity seems largely to consist in this, — that it has given mankind a great hope. Christ was a revelation of God's purpose for his children. The New Testament is full of hope. While it shows the evil of sin, it always inspires a spirit of courage. It tells sinners that God has

chosen them from the foundation of the world to be pure and holy in Christ Jesus. It moves men not by the fear of hell, but by the hope of heaven. Sin and evil are the dark background to a sunny landscape where light and love shine with heavenly radiance. The New Testament shows us an infinite tenderness in God to every child whom he has made; a love which nothing can weary. It calls us out of darkness into a marvellous light; out of sin into holiness, generosity, purity, love. It makes us feel that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. So we find in the gospel this double power, — truth, which shows us what we ought to be; love, which shows us that we can be what we ought, and that we can do all things through the power given to us by God.

The law of *vis inertiæ* implies that where there is the most power at last, there is the most difficulty at first. We cannot, then, expect that this great Christian faith in God, goodness, immortality, heaven, is to come without effort and struggle. We do not acquire this power of faith by reading a few books of theology, or by a process of reasoning. It grows up by a long experience; it is developed by a continued discipline. As life goes on, our faith ought to grow deeper every year. We first believe in God and Christ and the future life because these seem reasonable beliefs. But as we live in them and from them they become more and more real and certain. We learn by degrees to feel the presence

of God in Nature and in our own soul; we learn by degrees to have more and more faith in Christ as our great helper; we learn to pray more and more in spirit and truth. The prayer of form is easy; the prayer of faith is one of the greatest efforts of which the human mind is capable.

The law of inertia, therefore, seems to apply, not only in the physical order, but in the moral and spiritual order too. If we ask what is its good and what its evil, we have reached the result that it is wholly good. It helps us to keep what we gain; it preserves the moral and spiritual forces of the universe. It is the secret of progress. It is the condition of the great ascent of man from earth to heaven, from good to better, from imperfect truth and goodness to that which is unchanging and eternal.

XX.

THINK OF GOOD THINGS, NOT OF BAD THINGS.

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"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think of these things."

THE doctrine of the Apostle here is that it is better to look at truth than at falsehood; at what is noble than at what is mean; at purity, and not at impurity; at the beautiful, and not at the deformed; at goodness, not at wickedness.

The reason of this is obvious. It is a law of human nature that men are influenced by their environment. Mr. Brace takes boys from the streets of New York, who, if they grew up there, would inevitably furnish a large addition to the vicious and criminal classes. He sends them out to farms in Illinois and Iowa, and they become useful citizens. These boys are many of them the children of vicious people and criminals. But environment is too strong for heredity. The bad tendencies in

their blood are overcome by the purer influences around them.

But beside the outward environment of good or bad influences which go to educate us, there is an inner environment which is much more powerful. This consists of our own thoughts, our mental habits, our intellectual associations. That which we love to think about reacts on our character, and surrounds the soul with a sort of Chinese wall which other influences can with difficulty break through.

You must have noticed that within the last year or two we have had many accounts of little bands of juvenile robbers, — of children who have procured revolvers and have set up as brigands. What can be the cause of this but the pernicious dime novels describing boy brigands, and making heroes of young fellows who have run away from home and have tried to be bandits? These children may have been surrounded by good influences at home and at school, but their hearts and thoughts came under the power of these silly and evil stories.

The Bible says, very wisely, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." That is, a man's character is formed by what he loves to think about. There are matters which we think about because we must, — matters of business, daily duty, — but into which, often, we do not put our hearts; matters which we do mechanically and automatically. There are other subjects to which our thoughts turn of themselves, as the compass needle which you have

moved from the north with your finger immediately trembles back when you let it go.

Now, it is what we think in our hearts, what we love to think about, which forms our character. What is a miser but a man who has devoted his thoughts for years to making and saving money, till at last it becomes impossible for him to think of anything else? He would be glad to use his money, to enjoy it, to give, but he cannot; his thoughts have worn so deep a rut of habit that he is unable to get out of it. As he thinks in his heart, so is he.

We talk about the education which comes from books, the culture which is given by study, by schools, by lectures; but the deepest and strongest of all education comes from the atmosphere of thought with which we surround our souls. Therefore the Apostle says, Think of what is true, noble, beautiful, good; not of what is false, base, and mean. To think of good things, good men, noble actions, elevates the soul; to think of base and mean things draws it down.

There is a kind of captious criticism which devotes itself to finding errors and falsehoods. In theology this method of work has been made a special department; it is called Polemic theology, — that is, warlike theology. You will find some religious periodicals full of it. They fill their columns with attacks on other sects, with severe remarks upon heresy and heretics, and think that

by this warlike theology they are helping the Prince of Peace. They declare themselves serving truth by this course. But we serve truth best, not by attacking error, but by positive statements; by showing truth itself in its majesty and power. This is difficult; while denial, criticism, and fault-finding are easy.

There is an opposite theology which I call Irenic, or peace-making, theology. It does not consist in compromises, or in ignoring differences, or even in making light of error; it does not say, "Peace," where there is no peace, but it seeks first for the truth in all opinions, and afterward for the error. The day will come in which this Irenic theology will prevail; when Christians will rejoice in all the truth which God has sent to man in other religions, — rejoice to believe that mankind has always worshipped God, though under many different names, calling him Ormuzd or Bramah, Osiris or Zeus, or adoring the ineffable beauty and majesty of the universe without name or ritual or creed. The time must also come when Christian sects will lay aside their mutual hostility and jealousy, and rejoice to find that the points in which they agree are vastly more numerous and more important than those in which they differ. Then, at last, we shall have a true Catholic church, — many members in one body. Suppose, in a city like Boston, all the two hundred churches of different denominations should form one great organization, united in the

common work of purifying the city from its evils and sins, and bringing all souls to God, to truth, and to love. This will be done whenever each sect opens its mind to see the good and the truth and the love that there is in all the rest, instead of dwelling on their supposed errors.

In the same way the mistake of those who attack religion, Christianity, and the Bible, is, that they fix their mind on the errors and faults in all these, and not on what they are doing and have done for truth and goodness.

It is so easy to find fault! It is so easy to point out the errors of your neighbors, and stop there! But the question is, What are you to give us in the place of what you reject? The soul of man cries out for God, for the living God. It is too great to be satisfied with the things seen and temporal. Forever it looks beyond them to the things unseen and eternal. We, who believe in God, in the soul, in immortality, admit many of the errors and evils you assail; but we ask, "Can you give us something better, more true, more beautiful, than the faith you despise?" Do not feed us with the husk of criticism and denial when we are longing for divine truth.

It is certain that a habit of fault-finding, negative criticism, and denial, tends to decay and death. It is easy to obtain the applause of a crowd by pulling down what men have been accustomed to revere. But such triumphs are ephemeral. Not

the destructive thinkers, but the creative thinkers, are honored through all time as the benefactors of their race.

Analogous to this destructive criticism which attacks institutions and creeds is the cynical habit which looks for evil rather than goodness in human nature and human life. There is a cheap kind of worldly wisdom which prides itself on its knowledge of human nature, when it is only looking on the dark side of things. This, also, is a path which leads nowhere.

The largeness of the apostle's mind is seen in this recommendation to look with interest on "whatsoever things" are true, beautiful, and good. Some persons devote themselves to truth alone. Many preachers seem to think it the only object of the Christian pulpit to expound and enforce their peculiar systems of theology and metaphysics. Others think that only what is beautiful in nature or life is valuable, forgetting that all beauty, even the beauty of holiness, has its roots in some law, some principle. Others tell us to be good, to do our duty, and imagine that ethical instruction and moral lectures are enough to help us. But these alone, without faith as their root, are lifeless. We need the living tree, with faith as its root, beauty as its bright consummate flower, and goodness as its fruit. The power of Christianity, as given us by Jesus, is that it combines, in a perfect harmony, the true, the beautiful, and the good.

In the passage quoted, the Apostle unites these elements, and tells us to think of them, to fix our minds on them all. "Whatsoever things are true," he says, think of them. No matter where they come from, — from heretic, infidel, pagan, atheist, — if they can teach you anything new which you have not already known, thankfully accept it. "Whatsoever things are honest." "Honest" is not exactly the proper word here. A better translation would be, "Whatsoever things are adorable or worthy of reverence." The habit of looking up with reverence to what is above us is one of the chief moral forces which elevate the soul. The soul which, consumed by egotism, vanity, jealousy, is unable to see nobleness and revere it, has lost a great motive to progress. The greatest souls have been those most full of reverence. Shakspeare calls Reverence "the angel of the world." Dr. Spurzheim, one of the acutest of observers, long ago remarked that one of the chief defects of American character was the want of reverence. Without Reverence, life loses one of its chief charms, character becomes angular and hard, conduct grows wilful. Dignity, harmony, and the highest culture depend on reverence as their foundation. "Whatsoever things are adorable, noble, divine, reverence them." Reverence for these things opens the soul to what is heavenly, and brings down God into our hearts.

How mean is that life which has lost the power of seeing nobleness! Some persons by conceit, or

jealousy, or envy, close their hearts against the sight of what is excellent. They live in a fog of detraction, trying to lift themselves up by pulling others down.

The newspapers, with all the good they do, do us harm by continually showing us the dark side of life. The natural effect of reading them is to think the world made up of villains. Every morning they tell us of the evil acts done in the world since yesterday. We are told of every swindler, every knave, every man who has cheated and robbed, plundered his employers, deceived those who trusted him. We are apt to forget how small a part such men make of the great mass of society; what multitudes of happy homes, good friends, true and kind hearts, conscientious and faithful workers, there are in the world.

Once when I was in Marietta, Georgia, I visited the United States cemetery where repose the Union soldiers killed in Sherman's campaign around Atlanta. There are ten thousand in all. On seven thousand headstones are the names of those who lie beneath. But on three thousand stones there is no name; no one knows who lie there. Nameless martyrs for Union and freedom, they are unmarked by man and only known to God.

So, in our human life, are thousands of nameless martyrs, who devote themselves to truth and duty, and bless those around them, but whose names are on no monument, and never appear in the columns

of a newspaper. They make the real foundations on which our whole social structure rests. The foundations of a building are out of sight. Thus we are in danger of forgetting how much more of good there is in the world than evil, because evil is conspicuous and good is unobtrusive.

Paul does not forget the every-day virtues. He tells us to think of whatsoever things are just, pure, amiable, "of good report," everything which gives happiness to human life, which adds a charm to earthly existence. He does not despise beauty as our Puritan fathers did, nor undervalue the lighter graces of our common homes. Whatsoever things are "well spoken of" seemed to him to have some element of worth. He did not depreciate earthly goodness as "mere morality," or think that whatever was popular must necessarily be bad. He believed that men really like good things, and not bad things, and that popularity itself probably indicates some kind of merit.

If the things we love to think about thus mould and influence our character, is it not evident that when we love to think of God, we must receive the best influences? To think of God from fear, or as a form, or as a ritualistic duty, helps us little. But when our thoughts flow upward to God as the all-loving friend, the ineffable tenderness; the power which pours into Nature the abounding life of spring; who is seen in all the glory of summer skies, in the immeasurable smile of ocean, and the living solitude

of the Adirondack woods; in noble friendship and generous love, — when he comes to us as the personification of all that is most sublime and all that is most lovely in our human life, lifting it to an infinite value, bestowing on it an eternal stability, then the thought of him feeds the soul as nothing else does. It lifts up our heart, strengthens every good purpose, consoles us in every sorrow, gives us a power not our own to cleave to right, and thus feeds the soul from its centre with what is best. This is the Holy Spirit, which Jesus called "a well of water, springing up into eternal life" in the human heart.

We are sometimes asked tauntingly, and sometimes sorrowfully, "How can any one know whether there is a God?" The idea of God is in every human mind, and so deeply planted that it cannot be eradicated. We have within us the idea of the infinite and the eternal, though we have seen only what is finite and temporal. The universe is infinite and eternal. We can conceive of no limits to its extent and no bounds to its duration. We have in our minds the great conceptions of universal law, of infinite causation, of an everlasting distinction between right and wrong, and these are above all earthly experience. These conceptions are united in the idea of God, above all, through all, and within all things. And we are compelled by our reason to see unity in all things. We do not live in a chaos of drifting atoms, but in a cosmos of order and unity.

Hence the conception of God is fixed in every human soul.

But we may know God without knowing that we know him, or we may know him consciously. To pass to the conscious from the unconscious knowledge of God is the beginning of the higher life. This knowledge of God comes through experience, like other knowledge. It is by loving to do his will, loving to think of him in all things, loving to bear what he sends, feeling his presence in Nature and life, seeking his help for duty, his support in trial, that we come to know him. We know him by intercourse. It is by loving him that God becomes to us a reality, an object of knowledge.

We are also asked, "How do you know that God is a personal friend, and not a mere blind power, working unconsciously in Nature?" I answer that God, who by the very definition of the term is the highest of all beings, and the cause of all existence, cannot be lower and less than what he has made. Human personality is the most mysterious, the most certain, and the greatest fact in Nature. It combines in a perfect conscious unity thought, love, and will. This conscious unity of purpose, knowledge, and desire makes man the master of the world. If God is only an impersonal force, like those forces of Nature which we call blind, he is in this respect inferior to man, whom he has made.

Man's personality is the image and revelation of the divine personality. The highest person who

has ever appeared on earth, who combined in a perfect harmony more of wisdom, of power, and of love than any other, is thus the best revelation of the personality of God. Therefore Jesus of Nazareth is "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person." He is not the personal God, but the express image of that personality. His infinite compassion for man, his heavenly generosity, his sublime devotion to truth and goodness, are the best revelation of God to the heart. They bring us near to him. He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father, and is helped to come into direct communion with him.

Our friend, Edward Hale, has given us a favorite maxim, "Look up, and not down." This is the moral of what I have been saying here. Love to think of what is true, good, excellent, in everything and in every one, rather than what is false, wrong, and evil. These thoughts give us strength and peace, and are the source of true life. To do this brings us to God, and to know God and Jesus whom he has sent is life eternal. If there be any good anywhere, think of it. If there be any goodness anywhere, think of it. And to think of these aright, think of Him from whom all goodness comes and to whom all goodness tends.

XXI.

THE SIN WHICH BESETS US, AND THE GOOD WHICH HELPS US.

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"The sin which easily besets us."

THE Greek word which is here translated "besets," occurs only once in the New Testament, and probably means "that which insidiously surrounds or encircles one." The writer is comparing the Christian life to a race, and to run this race it is necessary to lay aside every weight and the habits which hamper one's movements. The man who was to run a race in the Greek or Roman games laid aside the outer cloak which encircled his body and which would have impeded his course. Therefore the writer says to Christians, "In running the Christian race, lay aside every impediment, — the weights which would keep you back, the sins which would entangle you like an outer cloak, — and then you can run more freely."

Most of us have some besetting sin; some temptation which is harder to resist than any other.

Men are different by organization, education, and position, and thus their temptations are different. The greatest and best men have some temptation which attacks them most readily and constantly. The saint has his peculiar temptations no less than the sinner.

In fact, every good quality a man has, by nature or grace, will run into a fault, unless balanced by some antagonist quality or principle. You would be apt to say that one could not be too conscientious. That is true. But he may have an unbalanced conscience, an uninstructed conscience, a too scrupulous conscience, an irritable conscience. Paul's unenlightened conscience made him think that he verily ought to persecute the Christians. Many other persecutors since his day have verily thought that they were serving God and doing their duty in persecuting heretics. Their conscience was uneducated. I have known people who were so conscientiously afraid of doing wrong that they did not venture to do right. They had a negative conscientiousness. Others have an irritable conscience. They are always tormenting themselves about their sins, sifting their motives, creating imaginary sins for themselves and others. To them the preacher referred, I suppose, when he said, "Be not righteous overmuch. Why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" The difficulty in such cases is that the conscience acts in too solitary, independent, and unbalanced a way. Instead of being a constitutional king,

governing by an organic law, it is a despot, ruling by will. It needs to be balanced by an enlightened intellect and a hopeful faith.

If even conscience may thus become a temptation, much more may other good qualities. Sympathy, good-nature, kindliness, are excellent powers, which soften and sweeten life. Only, if not held upright by the love of truth and justice, they may make us too soft and too yielding. A sympathetic person feels so strongly the claims of those who are present and around him, that he may forget what he owes to others who are absent. When he meets you to-day, he will become so interested in you as to break the promise he made to me yesterday. With him the absent have always less claim than those who are present. The temptation of a good-natured man is to break his promises, not to keep his engagements; to give away, on the spur of the moment, what really belongs to some one else. Goldsmith, in his comedy of "The Good-Natured Man," has described this weakness.

Hopefulness is another noble quality. It animates to great actions, stimulates to enterprise, is the motive to endeavor, and the cause of wonderful successes. Without this element of hope, there would be no progress, and life would lose much of its sunshine and charm. But hope, unbalanced by prudence, by caution, by sound judgment, is the source of rash speculation, wild adventure, and a confidence which trusts in luck rather than in

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industry and faithful continuance in well-doing. The hopeful man is tempted to take things for granted; and taking things for granted is the source of much failure and misery.

Reverence, as we have already seen, is a beautiful and elevating attribute of the human soul. The root of religion, it inspires worship, it creates enthusiasm for goodness and beauty; it is the source of a lovely modesty; it carries with it an ineffable charm which gives harmony to life. Those destitute of reverence are apt to be harsh and abrupt in their manners, coarse in fibre, egotistical and obstinate in character. And yet, out of an unbalanced reverence has come every kind of superstition,—a blind idolatry for the past, deference to custom, and hatred to reform. It is the cause of the most narrow kind of conservatism, which says, "Whatever is, is right."

But the reformer, in whom the organ of reverence is unusually small, has his own temptations too. He is prone to despise the past, to destroy any existing institution simply because it exists. Instead of saying, "Whatever is, is right," his motto and maxim often runs, "Whatever is, is wrong." The experience of centuries goes for nothing with such a man; he is ready to pull down established institutions, to overthrow ancient creeds, to attack the convictions of mankind, on the strength of the last notion which has happened to come into his head. It is under the lead of such men that reform passes

into destructive revolution; and that "altars are spurned, thrones insulted, order mocked at, and law defied."

Thus we might go on and show how temptation attacks us through our best tendencies; how every one has the defects of his qualities, and how no virtue is able to stand alone. Every unbalanced virtue drifts insensibly into a vice. Unbalanced courage ceases to be courage, and becomes rashness; unbalanced caution is not caution, but timidity. The unbalanced love of excellence changes it into a mad ambition.

What is higher, what more all-inclusive, than love? One apostle says of love, that it fulfils every commandment and comprehends every duty. Another tells us that he who loves dwells in God, and God in him. Saint Theresa, that best flower of Spain, "in the midst of all her terrors of sin, could find nothing worse to say of Satan himself than this, 'Poor wretch! he is unable to love!' and her only idea of hell was of a place whence love was banished." And yet, if love be not joined with truth, it ceases to be love. It loses its purity, its energy, its power to correct and reform the world, and passes into some form of weak concession, of passive sympathy. We see in the wonderful majesty of Jesus how in him truth and love were in perfect harmony, neither of them more apparent than the other. His was the truth spoken in love, the truth acted in love. In him mercy and truth

met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other.

But nowhere else, not even in the apostles, do we find such perfect harmony. Peter and Paul had each his own besetting sins, his own peculiar temptations. Peter was bold, hasty, impetuous, rash; and, like other hasty men, he had to pay the penalty by sometimes recanting what he had said. Such a man, under a strong impulse, will scale a height which he is not capable of maintaining. Under the excitement of his Master's arrest, Peter was bold as a lion, and drew his sword and smote the servant of the High Priest. Afterward, calmed down by finding himself alone among his Master's enemies, afraid of ridicule if he confessed the truth, he denied that same Master whom just before he had been ready to defend with his life. When in the presence of Cornelius, and seeing how good a man this heathen was, he rose for an hour to the height of the universal religion of Christ, and declared that "in every nation he who feared God and wrought righteousness was accepted of him." But afterward, in the presence and under the influence of bigoted Jews, he relapsed, and, according to Paul's account, dissimulated his real opinion, and refused to admit Gentiles to full communion. His temptation was to yield too much to the influences around him, and to follow the impulse of the moment. Thus he fell into inconsistencies. Peter was no hypocrite, he was the very opposite of that; but he was some-

times inconsistent. And I think you will everywhere find ten or a hundred inconsistent Christians where you discover one hypocrite.

Very different were the characteristics of the Apostle Paul, and his temptations were of another order. Paul was a man of fixed ideas, who lived to propagate his own convictions of truth. To preach these ideas, this new gospel, was his life. "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God." "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." The very suggestion that he might be mistaken about the resurrection filled him with horror. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." He could not work with those who did not believe as strongly as himself. He therefore left Judea and the Jews to the apostles, and took the whole Gentile world as his own dominion. He could not work long even with Barnabas. Free in his own intellectual activity, unfettered by any past, he was often impatient with those whose minds were more limited than his own. When he went for the first time to Jerusalem, and met the other apostles there, he was apparently disappointed by the limitation of their thoughts. "Those who seemed to be something," he says, "added nothing to me in conference." Who these were he tells us shortly afterward. He says that when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace given to him, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship,

that they should go to the Gentiles, and the other apostles to the Jews. Then he describes how when Peter came to Antioch he, Paul, withstood him to his face, because he did not walk uprightly. Is there not a slight touch of self-esteem and conscious superiority in the expression "those who seemed to be something," and in his saying that they could tell him nothing about Christianity which he did not know already? There lay his temptation, in the pride of intellect, in conscious mental supremacy. But he fought against this evil. He often reminded himself how he had persecuted the Christian Church. He kept before his mind the humility of Jesus. This grand intellect, this man of mighty intelligence, sacrificed thought and knowledge on the altar of love; said that knowledge was nothing, love everything; that knowledge would pass away, and only faith, hope, and love remain. Among the Corinthians, a people of active intelligence, he declared that God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and that the world by wisdom could never know God. He tells them that when he came among them he laid aside his wisdom, his logic, rhetoric, and philosophy, and made up his mind to preach the simple facts of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus and him crucified." "I fed you with milk, and not meat." "Not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Paul

knew what was his besetting sin, and resisted it by a noble act of self-denial.

It is curious to see how great men come in pairs, essentially different in their merits and defects, each somehow the supplement of the other. After Peter and Paul came Augustine and Jerome, Bernard and Abelard, Luther and Melanchthon, Wesley and Whitfield. Among the Greeks what a contrast between Aristides and Themistocles, — the one sternly just, severely righteous, refusing success and victory if they had to be earned by a single dishonest act; the other infinitely adroit, of vast ambition, brave and generous, but ready to take any advantage whether right or wrong. The result was that the upright Aristides was unpopular with the people. His severe integrity made him enemies, and his great services to the State were forgotten. Themistocles, on the other hand, was admired and loved, and had an unbounded popularity with the multitude. Aristides, strong in his perfect integrity, had little sympathy with weakness. Themistocles, sympathetic and full of kindly impulse, had no foundation of integrity.

John Quincy Adams was the typical Aristides of our time, as perfectly upright as he, and quite as unpopular. He had such a despotic conscience that his biographer says any duty had for him an irresistible attraction; but if it happened to be a disagreeable duty the attraction became an overwhelming enthusiasm. He never seemed able to

escape himself in his intercourse with others. He was like a monument which overlooks sea and land, grand, immovable, but very lonely.

Thus our temptations may come from our virtues no less than from our vices. The virtues and vices often grow out of the same roots; and there are tendencies, good in themselves, which become bad in their unbalanced excess. There are also bad tendencies in the blood, hard to eliminate by discipline, which are inherited from the past. Our temptations come, moreover, from habits we may have unconsciously and innocently formed, a habit of self-justification, of fault-finding, of looking at the dark side of things; a habit of irreverence in word or action, adopted perhaps out of gayety of heart, out of dislike to religious and moral cant, but not the less dangerous; a habit of anxiety, or one of procrastination, or of satire and sarcastic speech; or a custom of talking about one's self, or indulgence in a wilful determination to have our own way in everything. These habits are the sins which easily beset us, which hamper the soul and debase it.

Then there are temptations peculiar to races, to nationalities, to occupations, to position. The temptation of the English is to honor power, of the French to worship glory, of the Americans to admire smartness. The lawyer, the preacher, the platform orator, are all tempted to put rhetoric for logic, plausible and persuasive sophisms for solid

truths. The temptation of the conservative is to oppose all reform; of the reformer to carry reform into revolution. The temptation of the Orthodox believer is to fear progress; that of the heretic to take pride in not believing, and to think that because the houses of our forefathers are narrow and disagreeable, we can live out of doors with no house at all.

These are the sins which easily beset us. But let us not forget that if we are surrounded by temptations, God has with every temptation opened a way of escape. The influences to good are also within us and around us, and are mightier than those which lead to evil. Where sin abounds, grace yet more abounds. Were it not for this, life would be too hard, and duty too difficult.

First of all consider this, — that man has the wonderful faculty of reflection. He can stand apart from himself and look at himself. He is capable of self-knowledge, — that self-knowledge which ancient wisdom declared to have come down from heaven. He can judge himself, discover his own faults, acknowledge them, and so rise above them and at last conquer them. The first step is to get rid of self-justification and excuses, to see ourselves as we are. But even this self-examination must not go too far. It is not necessary or desirable to be always dissecting our character and analyzing our motives. Let us simply keep a watch over ourselves, and when we go wrong, see

it and frankly admit it. This is confession, and of this the deepest experience has said, "that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When we do not palliate, disguise, or justify our faults, but are willing to see them as they are, to put them behind us, and return to the right way, then God's forgiveness appears in his taking away the burden of evil. Then we are converted, and become as little children; like little children we are light of heart, free of soul, able to look up, to hope, to trust in the heavenly help and the divine love. It is God's law that it should be so; not merely God's compassion, but his justice is pledged to it. It is a part of the order of the universe that he who is willing to see and admit his sin shall be thus inwardly made new.

This great law of recovery and renewal is the first good thing which helps us. Then comes the goodness which surrounds us; the good men and women we know and have known; the good and noble lives we have seen; the inspiration of good books, sacred Scriptures, tender and noble poems, the presence of God above and around us; the gracious providence which blesses us day by day. All this gives us faith in goodness; and faith in the reality and power of goodness is another great help to resist temptation and conquer sin.

There is also in human nature the wonderful power of adopting an ideal aim and pursuing it

in spite of all obstacles. This power has been the secret of vast accomplishment. A persistent purpose is almost sure, in the long run, to triumph. This faculty belongs to man. Animals have a purpose, and act with an intention; but, so far as we know, no animal ever adopts an ideal aim and pursues it. The dog, the ant, the half-reasoning elephant, pursue the aims common to their race, the purposes fixed in their nature. But man can say, "I will devote my life to becoming rich, to becoming wise, to becoming powerful." Or he may say, "I will make it the object of my life to grow, to form a noble character, and to this aim all others shall be secondary."

Then, too, by self-scrutiny we see that there is a power of goodness within us by which we may hope to conquer evil. Every one has a good side, a tendency upward. Total depravity is an absurdity and an impossibility. And if there is hereditary depravity, there is also hereditary goodness. That, also, has become a part of our blood and brain. In every human being there is not only some peculiar weakness, some besetting sin, but also some special strength, some element of power. It is just as important, just as much a duty, to find out the good side of our character as the bad side, for we need this as an encouragement and help. For the same reason it is the duty of parents, teachers, and friends to show children and youth not only their faults, but also their good qualities. Those who dislike us

can find our faults; we need also that those who love us should tell us, not only what we ought to do, but what we can do. If we all have some sin which easily besets us, we have also some goodness which is ready to help us. And by encouraging the good side of our life we conquer the evil.

Another great and blessed help is the society and companionship of good people, of those better than ourselves, of those who are going the right way. This strengthens in us everything which is best.

The real object of the Christian church is to give us good company; to put one who is trying to do right with others who are also trying to do right. Jesus gave the definition of his church when he said, "Where two or three meet together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He does not say where a large number sit side by side, but where two or three meet together. It is not a meeting of outward, visible contact, but of inward communion of mind and heart. And "in his name." That does not mean calling him Lord, Lord! but being in his spirit, having his purpose, meeting to do his work. If two or three unite together to help the Lord's poor, to redeem the slave, to aid each other in growing better and wiser, then, though Jesus has gone up to God, his Father and ours, he will come to make another invisible companion in that group of his servants. Many people try to get into good society; they strain every nerve to gain another step in their social position. But the best society in the world

is where good people unite for a good object, for the Lord Jesus himself is in their midst. His sacred, invisible presence softens and strengthens their hearts. This is the great blessing of the church of Christ, that, with all its faults, it offers to every struggling soul, however lowly, forlorn, and weak, this "good society," this "good company," so that they are no longer wholly lonely or forlorn.

Let us surround our souls with all good things, — good companionship, good books, good work, — for these strengthen and encourage the good side of our life.

But the best and highest of all influences is that which comes to us when we walk daily in the presence of our heavenly Father; when we are able to talk with him as with a friend; when we know that he loves us, and that his spirit is ready to help us. Plutarch tells us that Pericles, almost the greatest of the orators of Greece, never went into a public meeting to speak to the people, without asking the gods to help him say the right thing, and to keep him from saying the wrong. We, every morning, enter on a new day, in which we are to meet unknown dangers, duties, opportunities, in which we may do good or evil to those around us. What a difference it would make if we should, every morning, look up, open our hearts, and seek for guidance, good influence, a good spirit, from that divine Power who is always waiting to be gracious! "Waiting to be gracious;" waiting till we give him

an opportunity of blessing us; knocking at the door of our heart till we are willing to open it to that which is most tender and blessed in the universe. Of all goodness, his is the goodness which is most ready to help us. Other goodness hesitates and lingers. His is waiting to be gracious. The goodness of our best friends sometimes grows weary, but his is never tired out by our folly or our sin. The best and noblest human heart is not always prepared to meet our emergency; but God's love is at hand, in all its fulness, every hour.

Let us surround ourselves with all this human and superhuman help, thus to meet the exigencies of our life.

XXII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

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"Who is my neighbor?"

THE lawyer was not asking this question for information, but rather to find out what Jesus would say. There was nothing wrong in this. Jesus himself often asked questions in the same way, — not for information, but to lead his disciples to search into their own minds. This is one way of teaching, and a very ancient one. It is called the catechetical method of instruction. Socrates used it almost exclusively. By asking a series of carefully arranged questions, he compelled his disciples to search their own minds to the bottom, and find out what they really knew and believed, and what they did not. Jesus did the same. Thus, he said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread for these to eat?" "And this," adds the Evangelist, "he said to *prove him*, for he himself knew what he would do." The word here translated *prove* is the Greek word πειράζω, elsewhere usually translated *tempt*. Twenty-nine times it is translated *tempt*, and eight times *examine, try, prove, assay*. It

has a good or bad meaning, according to circumstances. When questions are asked to mislead, to confuse, then it may be rendered *tempt;* but when they are asked to bring out truth, we may translate it by the word *try*, or *examine*. A lawyer, in court, asks questions of witnesses, not always for information, but to try them, to find out what they really know. When his object is to elicit truth, then he is doing right; but when he asks questions in order to confuse the witness and throw a cloud over the testimony, then he is a Satan, a tempter. All depends on the motive and the method.

I do not think that this lawyer had any wrong motive in asking Jesus the question, "Who is my neighbor?" The worst we can say of him is that he probably thought he could test the insight of Jesus by his acuteness, and found himself very soon in deeper water than he expected. At all events, we cannot find fault with him, for his question resulted for us in a great good. It brought out the story of the Good Samaritan, which otherwise we might never have had.

I have often said that if I wished to have a creed, I should make myself one by taking the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. The one would contain my theology, and the other my morality. Most theological questions may be answered out of the first. For example: 1. *What is sin?* It is to take your portion of goods, and go off to spend it on yourself, away from God.

2. *What is the punishment of sin?* A mighty famine, and absence of love; emptiness and loneliness. 3. *What is repentance?* Going to God, confessing one's sin, and wishing to be his servant. 4. *What is God?* A father who loves his sinful child, and cares for him enough to come to meet him when he is a great way off.

Thus, too, we can answer most moral questions out of the parable of the Samaritan.

Notice first the man who fell among thieves. The man is the human soul.

We all of us take our journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, and we all fall among thieves. Youth is our Jerusalem, — innocent youth, artless childhood, affectionate, confiding, dependent. It is a city in which God dwells. In the child's heart is the holy of holies; a sacred place, seldom entered, but containing the ark of the covenant, — the covenant between the Creator and his child. There is the budding rod of Aaron, fresh every morning with new buds of hope and opening flowers of expectation. We pass from Jerusalem to Jericho, — to Jericho, standing on the shores of the dead and bitter sea, but a city of palms and roses.

We all go from Jerusalem to Jericho. We leave our childhood and our youth behind us, on our way to the ancient city where age and death are waiting for us, but where we may find the palms of immortal life and the roses of undying youth.

And we fall among thieves by the way. Life itself is a thief, and steals from us strength, youth, beauty, power of body and mind, — the externals, the raiment of the soul. The world is another thief, and steals our simplicity, steals our innocence, wounds us in its hard struggles, and leaves us scarred, hard, and harsh; cold, selfish, and suspicious. Sinful habit is another thief, who takes from us the power and the wish to reform, and so leaves us half dead by the wayside. We cover up these wounds; we are too proud to let it be known that we wish for sympathy or need help. Each one knows the bitterness of his own heart, but we do not see what is in the heart of our neighbors. They look so serene and self-satisfied that we think they are so. We do not suppose that they need us at all, or that they wish for any sympathy of ours.

Oh, my brothers and sisters! as we look about us on our fellow-creatures, let us think that every one has his own secret sorrow. This will lead us into a broader sympathy. That man, who seems so successful, has his bitter disappointments. You see his outward triumphs, — his offices, his titles, his wealth; but if you looked into his heart you would find, perhaps, an aching wound. Perhaps the son, for whom he labored, whom he expected to take his place and inherit his name, was snatched away by an early death, and wherever he goes he sees the face of his boy. Perhaps he needs love, and that is the one thing he cannot have. Crowds

applaud his eloquence, but he would give it all for one look of sincere affection. Perhaps there is an undying remorse in his heart for one false step which can never be blotted out or recalled. See that woman, so gay and witty, the brilliant ornament of every circle; she is perishing with hunger; she has nothing to live for; she has thrown away her life, and does not know that if she will she can find it again, and that Christ can give it to her more abundantly if she will really, with sincerity, come to him. We are all wounded, naked, hungry, half dead, and all need the good helping hand, and kind loving eye and word.

Notice again the Priest and the Levite.

The Priest represents formal religion of all kinds; the religion of ceremony, the religion of dogma, the religion of sentimentalism, — the religions which have no *love* in them.

These pass by on the other side. One man tells you that God cannot love you unless you have the right belief. Another says, "Join my church; it is the only true church." But all this is the other side of the road. We lie half dead with our sins. What we need is to hear a kind voice and have a helping hand put out to us. "Show me, O Priest, how I can escape from my misery; how this hunger in my heart can be stilled; how I can go back to my Father's house! What do I care for creeds and ceremonies? I am cold and naked and starved! I need love, truth, God! Bring me to him!" And

the Priest replies, "What do you think about the Trinity and Atonement?" and so passes on the other side.

The chief difficulty with our religion is that it is too stiff and formal; it is put away by itself, as something for Sundays; it does not show us God, as Paul said, "not far from any one of us," in the deep blue sky, in the glowing sunlight, in the music and poetry which touch our inmost hearts, in the love of a dear friend, in the hand which touches ours in our sorrow with a magnetic thrill of sympathy, — a hand which seems to have in it the sympathy of good men and women and the angels. This is God not far from us. And if a better thought or purpose arises in our heart, and we long to know and love God and goodness, this also is God, who touches the soul, as the musician the hard metallic strings of his harp, drawing out of them a harmony which they did not know they held. The harp stood voiceless and covered with dust for years, and thought itself without a voice. But one day the master comes, and draws from it symphonies of celestial joy, and makes it sing thanksgivings and allelujahs like those of heaven. Our heart is thus silent and thus dead till God touches it; then it finds itself able to rise into strains of peace, courage, hope, love.

The Priest has come and gone. Absorbed in his dogmas and ritual, he does not even see the dying man. So our churches stand in the middle of the

streets in which young men and women are being led away to evil, and does not see them, or know anything of them. Such churches pass by on the other side.

The Levite does a little more. He comes and looks on him, and then passes by also. Perhaps he is a moralist, an ethical philosopher, or a political economist, — a man whose religion is made up of reason, conscience, and the law of duty, but has no love in it.

He looks at the man, and says: "He put himself into this difficulty. He ought to have been more careful. If I help him, he will probably fall again, so it will do no good. Perhaps he did something to provoke the robbers. There is usually wrong on both sides. He is very likely an impostor, who only pretends to be in trouble to get help; or perhaps he is a bad man who is thus punished by Providence for his sins, and I ought not to interfere between him and divine justice; and, now that I come to notice it, I see he is no neighbor of mine — he is a heretic! He belongs to the school of Hillel; or perhaps he is a Sadducee. It is better for the world that he should die, and so an end of him and his heresies. Besides, charity begins at home. If I stop to help him, the robbers will very likely come back. My life is more valuable than his. I think, therefore, it is my evident duty to go to Jericho, and attend to my appointments there, for I am already behind my time."

So the Levite speaks to us out of that barren, rocky defile, through the intervening period of eighteen centuries. Are not we often Levites, too?

The Priest has gone on. The Levite has gone on. The wounded man lies still, and groaning in his anguish. Minute by minute he is growing weaker. He thinks of his wife; and of his children who are playing around the door, all unconscious of his misery. His wife is going about the house busily engaged in her affairs. He wonders when they will hear of his death, and who will tell them. He looks up and sees a cloud drifting peacefully along through the sky. "Will no one go and tell them that I am dying here?" No. The desert is silent; no one comes. He listens. He seems to hear something like the step of a beast among the rocks. Yes! some one approaches. "It is a Samaritan. Only a man belonging to the barbarous infidels who live at Sychar. He will do nothing for me, a Jew."

But the Samaritan comes near, and now the man has found a friend who does not think of the robbers, or the danger, or the delay to his journey, his distance from his own home, or the Jews' hostility to him, or whether his money will hold out, or the thousand other excellent excuses which men make for not doing their duty. He is the man's neighbor now, for the man needs him; no matter what at other times is their relation to each other.

See how deep this man's motive must have gone. How much Jesus has contrived to tell us in these few lines!

Some men give because it is expected of them. They never take the initiative. They do not look out for opportunities. They wait till they are asked, and till public opinion requires it. But no public opinion required the Samaritan to help the traveller. If he had left him to die, no one would have known it — no one but himself and God! It was not expected of a Samaritan to help a Jew; the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.

Some men are so absorbed in their own affairs that they do not notice the needs of others. We go to our business in the morning, stay there all day, come back tired at night, do the same next day, and have no time to think of our neighbor. The Samaritan was busy; he was on a journey. He had his own affairs to attend to. But he had a heart open and watchful, looking out for occasions of usefulness. To such a man opportunities come.

Some men are so slow in making up their minds as to whether they *ought* to do anything, whether they *can* do anything, or, if so, *how* they can do it, that the time and the need pass by. But the Samaritan was prompt. One thing which enables a good man to act promptly is, that he does not have to stop and think how *he* is likely to be affected by what he does. He simply asks, is it right? "No

summons, mocked by chill delay," finds him saying, "Come to-morrow." He does it now, at once. Promptness, therefore, is another element in Christian charity. Do it to-day, and then you can do something else to-morrow.

Some men and women never can help any one if it involves a sacrifice; or, if they do, they talk about their sacrifices until we wish they had not made any. But others make sacrifices and never speak of them. I do not believe the Samaritan told, after he got home, of his great loss of time and vast outlay of two pence to help the wounded man. A good man enjoys doing good. If it costs him anything, it is so much paid out for his own pleasure. Talk to him of his sacrifices, and he laughs at you. These are his indulgences. That is why Christian charity does not appear unto men to fast, but only unto its Father in heaven.

When Jesus told this story of the good Samaritan, it shocked the prejudices of the Jews who listened. A good Samaritan to them sounded as it would sound to Christian ears to speak of a good infidel, a good atheist. It cut across their prejudices, and that was why Jesus selected the Samaritan for his type of a good man. The lawyer, when asked to say who was the poor man's neighbor, could not make up his mind to say, "The Samaritan;" so he replied in a roundabout way, "He that showed mercy on him."

We see, by this story, that our neighbor is the

man whom we can help. Those are not our neighbors, who live near us, but those to whom we are brought near by sympathy. In this way the man who is a thousand miles off is perhaps more my neighbor than he who lives next door to me. I make men my neighbors when I take an interest in them. The soldiers in the Crimea were neighbors to Florence Nightingale. The insane people in Missouri or Rome were the neighbors of Dorothea Dix. The slaves in Georgia were neighbors to Dr. Channing. The men of Kansas were neighbors to Charles Sumner. Sir John Franklin and his crew were neighbors to Dr. Kane. When the Poles and the Greeks were struggling for their freedom, we felt that they were our neighbors and sent them aid. When the people of Ireland were perishing of famine, we sent the frigate "Jamestown" filled with corn, flour, and other provision for their help. Though we had never seen any of these people, they became our neighbors as soon as they needed our assistance.

Thus it really depends on the helper whether neighborhoods shall exist. Not the man who is to be helped but the man who comes to help him makes the neighborhood. It is the Samaritan who was found to be the neighbor — not the Jew. He who shows mercy to us becomes our neighbor. He who feels for me, though a thousand miles off, is more my neighbor than the man I meet every day who does not care for me.

Christianity, which enlarges the soul, makes a great neighborhood of mankind. The people of far Cathay became neighbors to Europe as soon as Christian missionaries went among them and brought back tidings of their needs. Thus neighborhoods expand indefinitely like circles in the water, which cross each other in all directions without interfering with or obliterating each other. We are attracted toward those whom we think ourselves able to assist, and they become neighbors by sympathy. There are also those who are spiritually our neighbors; those whose minds and hearts need that help which we are able to render. He is a good Samaritan in the highest sense who can pour oil and wine into the wounds of the soul; who, by a word spoken in season, of warning, counsel, consolation, encouragement, can give a new direction to our life, awaken within us the sense of responsibility, show us how to trust in God, and quicken us with a new hope. But how few are neighbors to each other in this way. Too seldom do we know what is passing in the minds of others, and too often we distrust our own power of helping them.

Some men who would like to be of use in the world, fail in their endeavor because they finish nothing. Their good actions are like buildings begun on a grand scale, but where the funds have given out before they were completed. Such a building as this, begun, but remaining unfinished,

is apt to be called a man's "Folly." Some men do enough to satisfy their consciences and then stop, leaving their good works unfinished. They have had the trouble of attempting to do good, and none of the satisfaction of accomplishment. So their action stands as their half-built folly. How many of these unfinished good works we do! We work a little while for different objects, — take our class in the Sunday school, or engage in a hospital or some charity, and then stop and say, "Now I have done my part; let some one else do the rest." But Christianity counts nothing done while anything remains to be done. The Samaritan might have bound up the wounds and then said, "I have done *my* duty; let some one else take him to the inn." But his object was not to do his duty, but to save the man. That is the difference between conscience and charity.

How often, when we are asked to subscribe to this or that good object, we reply, "This is an excellent object. I heartily approve of it, but the fact is, I have had a great many calls lately, and have been giving a great deal. Go to some one else." We forget that if we have been giving much we have also been receiving much.

The old Latin proverb says, *Qui suadet, sua det,* — "If you ask others, give yourself." A man who obeys that maxim, and who begins by giving his own share, can then ask others with an easy mind, and is very likely to succeed in his applications.

What we see, therefore, in this example is the superiority of love to all other motives. It is better than conscience, because it never tires till the good is done; it is better than sympathy, for it remembers the absent as well as those present; it is better than the desire to save one's soul, which makes sacrifices and performs acts of self-denial; for it is a self-forgetful giver.

And, besides all this, it is universal. It makes no account of a man's race, or creed, or position in the community; no account of his folly, ignorance, or sin. It does not ask whether he was to blame or not for what he suffers, but only, Does he suffer, and can I help him?

XXIII.

BEGINNING AT THE RIGHT END.

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BEGINNING AT THE RIGHT END.

"That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual."

IN common life and practice we recognize the importance of beginning at the right end. There are strict, stern laws in nature which command us to follow the right order in all that we do; which say "First the blade, then the ear, afterward the full corn in the ear." The farmer must plough before he can sow; the builder must lay the foundation before he finishes the interior; the artist must make his sketches before he paints his landscape; the physician must begin with a study of symptoms before he proceeds to his indications of cure; the lawyer's brief must be prepared before he can argue his case. If you propose to build a railroad, you begin by making your surveys and selecting your route. In the domain of external nature everything must be in its own order, — this thing first and that second.

When we come to work done in the soul of man, the same is true. The same law of method applies, and it is because we do not see clearly the mental and moral processes in the human mind that we fail to perceive this fact. Mistakes and harm come from trying to do the second thing before we have done the first, and not taking everything in its own order.

The law of mental progress is that one should begin with the easy and go on to the difficult; begin with the simple, and proceed to the complex; begin with the concrete fact, and go on to the abstract law; become familiar with the first step before proceeding to the second. When this law is neglected in education the result is unfortunate. If you try to teach little children the abstractions of grammar, of logic, of history, instead of simple facts and laws, you stupefy the poor things; you do not teach them. You can compel them to repeat, by rote, abstract rules, and to give learned answers to your questions; but the little child does not learn anything. He is repeating words without sense. But when you begin at the right end in teaching, and follow the method of nature, how fast and how gladly the child learns! Each new acquisition of knowledge connects itself with what went before, and grows naturally out of it, roots itself naturally in it. Having taken the first step, the second becomes easy, and then the third follows as a matter of course.

The best illustration of this is mathematics. How incredible it seems that man should be able to calculate an eclipse a thousand years beforehand; to measure the distance of the sun and stars; to weigh the planets in scales, and the moon in a balance; to survey the pathless march of a comet from outside darkness till it falls toward the sun. The North American Indian tracks his foe through the woods by the slight indications of a broken twig or a stone turned over by the foot. But the astronomer tracks his planet, as it pursues its way through space, where no eye has ever seen it, and where it leaves no visible trace of its path, — he tracks it by the slight quivering produced by its attraction on another planet, one hundred millions of miles away. Now, this is all done by beginning at the right end; by first adding one to two, and then two to three. It is by taking a great many steps, each one of which is simple and easy; for if taken in proper order each one prepares the way for the next.

Now, when God, in his providence, sent Christianity into the world, he proceeded on the same plan. He sent other religions before it to prepare its way. That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterward that which was spiritual. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Moses came first, to prepare the way by his ten commandments; and then the prophets followed, taking another step up out of the religion of form into the religion of spirit; and

then came John the Baptist, to prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; and at last, when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth his Son. We all admit that the religion of Moses was preparatory to that of Christ. But more is true. God did not disinherit the rest of the human race; he gave them their religions too. Confucius in China; Zoroaster in Persia; the Vedas in India; the religions of Egypt, Greece, Rome; the philosophy of Anaxagoras, Socrates, Zeno, Plato, — these were all stepping-stones by which humanity crossed the abyss of darkness and evil, and came up toward the Son of Man. Inconceivably grand does the character of Jesus appear when thus regarded as the summit of humanity, as the fulfilment of Pagan as well as Jewish prophecy; as the Christ foretold by the Gentiles as well as by the Jews; as

> "One far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

God, in teaching religion to mankind, began with primary schools. Confucius taught, in one, respect for parents and superiors. Zoroaster taught, in another, to think purely, speak purely, and act purely. Buddha taught, in another, the immutability of law and the certainty of retribution. We may even say that as we now teach little children by object lessons, so Divine Providence used a similar method, and allowed the infantile mind of the race visible and objective prayers. Men were allowed to say their prayers by outward sacrifices. If a man was

grateful, he offered a bullock as a thank-offering to God; if he was penitent, he brought a lamb as a sin-offering. This may be called the liturgy of the whole ethnic or Gentile world. Only the Persians did without it, for they had their diviner symbols in the skies. The sun, the moon, the planets, the flaming star Sirius, — these made their ritual services; the mountains were their temples, and an ever-burning fire their prayer-book. Thus did humanity worship, in its simple childhood, — sincerely but ignorantly; but when Jesus came, humanity became a man, and put away childish things. It passed out of object lessons into books; out of the primary school into the grammar school and high school. The day for sacrifices and a sacrificial worship was over. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father," but only in spirit and in truth.

But afterward the Church made the same mistake which we make in our schools when we teach little children abstractions instead of concrete facts.

For example, the little children in the Boston grammar schools have been taught till recently and perhaps are still taught such lessons as these: —

"A consonant denotes a contact of some of the organs of speech."

"Etymology treats of the true roots and the true and right forms of words to put in sentences according to syntax."

"A participle is a form of the word which merely

assumes the act or state, and is construed like an adjective."

Most of the English grammar taught in our schools consists of such stupidities as this, the knowledge of which we may safely say never did practical good to any human being. No one ever spoke or wrote English more correctly in consequence of having committed to memory such dismal abstractions. But as it has been done for a long time, it will probably continue to be done for a great while longer. At all events, this is not the proper teaching to begin with. It may possibly be interesting to a man who is fifty or sixty years old to know that the "superlative degree represents the described objects as being a part of the others;" but it can do no good, surely, to a small boy to learn that extraordinary statement.

Now, just as the school has put its little learners into these abstractions of grammar, the Church has put its little Christians into similar abstractions of theology. Men inculcate the most abstruse and self-contradictory doctrines about the Trinity, total depravity, and divine decrees, with a charming simplicity, as though they were elementary facts of morals and piety. Before a man can enter the Church, which he is supposed to join in order to learn how to be a Christian, he must already be a believer in these recondite abstractions. This is worse than the schools, for even the grammar schools do not require a knowledge of the pluper-

fect potential as a condition of admission. The Church demands, as a condition of admission, faith in the very articles it proposes to teach.

The fault I find with creeds is, that they begin at the wrong end. There is no serious objection to aged theologians settling among themselves God's plan of salvation; but surely this is not milk for babes.

The wisdom of Jesus appears in the simplicity of his teaching. He put his thought into lovely parables; stories founded on life; illustrations of truth taken from dinner-parties, baking, the farmer's work in the field, the woman's work in the kitchen. He taught the loftiest truths, not in dry abstractions, but in the hieroglyphics of dawn and night, of flowers and birds, of the instincts of the dog and the swine, the law of growth in corn and vine. With him, that was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterward that which was spiritual.

The Apostle Paul is usually considered as fond of teaching deep and difficult doctrine, but he was a man of admirable common sense. When he wrote what is to us so difficult, you may be sure that those who received his letters were quite able to understand his meaning. You must recollect that the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Philippians were not written by Paul with the expectation that they were to make part of the sacred literature of the human race. He did not write them as

treatises for all time, but as answers to questions, and solutions of difficulties, existing in particular churches. His plan of teaching he explains at the beginning of the Epistle to the Corinthians. He there says: I came not to you with excellency of speech (that is, rhetoric) or wisdom (that is, logic). I made no oration nor speech. I only preached Jesus Christ and him crucified; that is, the simple story of the facts of the life and death of Jesus. So your faith was not founded on argument or demonstration, but on pure conviction. It was not theology, but religion. He says that with more advanced Christians he has a theology and a philosophy of Christianity, — a philosophy deeper than that of the sophists of Greece. But these infant Christians he feeds with milk and not meat; simple facts, not deep philosophy.

The law of culture is to begin at the beginning. Thus, in belief, let us begin at the beginning. Infidelity often consists in thinking that we ought to swallow the last thing in Christianity before we have really digested the first. A young man says he is an infidel. Why? Because he cannot, for example, understand the story of Balaam's ass, or that of Jonah and the whale, or because of the apparent contradictions in the history of the New Testament or Old Testament. But he does not refuse to accept Greek and Roman history because of similar contradictions and obscurities. He begins with the plain and consistent, and leaves the

rest to follow. I have had little boys, ten and twelve years old, come to me, much troubled in mind, and thinking that their religion was giving way, because they could not reconcile divine foreknowledge and human freedom. But there is enough in Christianity which is plain. Take the Sermon on the Mount, take the parables of the Talents, and the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan. What should you say of your son if he should renounce his multiplication table because he could not comprehend La Place; who should proclaim himself an infidel to the Rule of Three because of obscurities in Newton's Principia?

Begin at the beginning; believe first that which is simple; make that thoroughly your own, carry it out in action and life, and leave the five points of Calvinism till you are forty or fifty years old; the brain does not grow too dry for those husks at any period of life.

We all ought to be doing something for our Master and his cause. How can we call ourselves Christians if we merely live on, getting and spending, dressing and eating, amusing ourselves, reading novels, and so drift through life? Suppose a man wishes to be a Christian, how shall he set about it? Shall he go from church to church? shall he wait for a revival? shall he struggle to go through some great change? No. He must do what he can. He must repent as the Prodigal Son repented, who simply said, "I will arise and go to my father."

He must become a Christian as Matthew and Peter became Christians, by beginning to follow Christ; he must do good, as the Good Samaritan did it, by helping the first man he found lying in his path as he went to his affairs. He must pray as the Publican prayed, all whose prayer was contained in these seven words, — "God be merciful to me a sinner." He must be charitable as the widow was, who put into the treasury just what she happened to have, which was a farthing. The great thing is to make up our minds, once for all, to do what we can, not to wait, not to linger; not to think that some other time will be better than now, some other season more convenient than this, but to determine every morning to take the opportunities the day may bring of serving Christ.

So, in piety and prayer, we ought to begin at the beginning. It is a curious fact that the Church has often solemnly taught that men must begin at the end. Eminent theologians have said that one must not pray at all till converted and regenerate. Some unregenerate persons prayed to Christ when he was in the world, and he answered their prayer. The Roman centurion, who worshipped Jupiter and Mars; the woman of Phœnicia, who worshipped Baal and "Astarte's bediamonded crescent," — these prayed to Jesus and he helped them. But God, it seems, is not so condescending; he can only hear the prayers of good men. Many persons are taught to believe that they cannot pray aright till they

are miraculously transformed and renewed. But our motto says, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." Natural prayer must precede spiritual. Begin by seeing God in nature, in providence, in life; begin by saying, "God help me;" "I thank thee, O Father;" by saying, "God forgive me;" so a habit of prayer is formed, growing purer, loftier, more constant, more prevailing, more spiritual. It will be pervaded with the spirit of brotherhood, fellowship, and charity. God asks nothing of us that he is not ready to help us do. He asks nothing but what it is good for us to do. And our first duty, under the Gospel of Christ, is not to be afraid of God. Religious teaching, or that which is called so, makes God terrible; but Gospel teaching does not. The power of the Gospel consists in enabling us to say, Abba, Father; when it has taught us to say that, it has done its work. It has then converted us, and made us like little children, and so we can see the kingdom of heaven.

This word *Abba*, "papa," the first cry of the dependent infant, is also the last attainment of the highest piety. It needs God's spirit and Christ's gospel to bring us back to that elementary sound, and enable us to say to the almighty and infinite Being this little word, *Abba*. It requires that perfect love which casts out all fear. It is the simplest state of mind, and, therefore, often the hardest. The word which is very nigh to us, in our mouth and our heart, is the very one we do not find. So we have

seen persons looking for that which they were holding in their hand.

> "A man's best things are nearest him,
> Lie close about his feet."

And, lastly, let love begin at the beginning. The law says, "Love God with all the heart," and many think because they cannot love him so, they cannot love him at all. But does a father or mother criticise the love of their child? Are you not glad to have your child trust you? You do not wish him to be running up all the time to tell you of it. The child rambles over the house or through the field, about his small affairs all day. But the mother does not doubt his love; one kiss at night before he goes to sleep is enough. God does not doubt our love because we are not all the time telling him of it. No. He wishes us to learn how to love him by loving each other. Love to God and man, Jesus tells us, are the same feeling directed to different objects. There is a text which seems almost to have been forgotten, and that is the passage in John, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" We climb up to the love of God by the love of man. Every pure, generous, unselfish throb of affection and act of good-will toward man lifts us nearer to God. Piety grows out of charity. That love is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. Follow the order of Nature. Instead of

making it a task to pray to God and to feel emotion toward him, take the first steps toward him by loving and serving man. Forget yourself, my dear brother, my dear sister, — forget yourself in the need of some one else; then you will find yourself coming nearer to God.

A little child said to its mother, "Mamma, have angels wings?" "Yes, my dear; why do you ask?" "Because if they have wings, I do not see why they needed a ladder to come down to Jacob." But perhaps even angels need ladders; perhaps we all must help ourselves up or down, step by step. We must do the simplest thing first, then take the next step. We have no wings with which to fly up to God and heaven, so we must be satisfied to go a little distance each day. The Christian Church has not yet learned the fable of the hare and the tortoise. It sometimes prefers an occasional revival to a steady growth. But the "Tortoise Christian," doing with his might what his hand finds to do every day, will be very apt to reach the goal before the "Hare Christian," who waits for a revival.

"It is not to be like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be,
Or standing like an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere.
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May.
Although it fall and die that night,
It was the plant and flower of Light!
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be."

XXIV.

THE HEAVENS AND HELLS OF THE PRESENT LIFE.

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THE HEAVENS AND HELLS OF THE PRESENT LIFE.

"If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, thou art there also."

IT is commonly taught and believed that heaven and hell are two regions of the universe, widely and forever separated from each other by external barriers, into which human beings are to be distributed hereafter, after death; and, having once entered either, in that they are to remain forever. I think these positions to be unfounded. I do not believe that heaven and hell are widely separated in space, but that they are often close to each other, so that persons in hell can converse with those in heaven, and *vice versa*, as Father Abraham and Dives conversed in the parable. Nor do I believe that we are to wait until we reach another world before we enter heaven or hell. I think we may and do often go into heaven and hell now. Nor do I admit the pure assumption of theology that those who go into heaven or into hell are never

to come out again. I believe that the Gospel assumes, by its teachings and blessed invitations, that we can rise out of hell and go up into heaven; and it also assumes, by its solemn warnings, that we may sink back out of heaven into hell.

For what is *hell*, and what is *heaven?* Essentially, and in themselves, what are they? Primarily and essentially, they are inward states, conditions of the soul; secondarily, they are the external results of those states. Heaven is love, knowledge, power, combined, — generous love, guided by wise insight, and made effectual by unfaltering energy. Wherever this exists the essence of heaven exists, for this state of soul is the image and reflection of God, in whom love, wisdom, and power are one. Such a soul is in heaven, for it is in continued communion with God. Such a soul makes heaven around it, wherever it is, for it influences other open souls inevitably and necessarily.

And what is hell but the presence of the opposite spirit, — wilful, hard, selfish, stubborn; wilfulness instead of energy, stupid prejudice instead of insight, hard selfishness instead of generosity. From a mean, cold, cruel soul *hell* is radiated; the blackness of darkness goes out from it. The brutal man carries an atmosphere of brutality around him, and creates a like state of mind in others.

You enter one house, and you are in an atmosphere of peace. All is harmony and good-will. Father and mother, brothers and sisters, are inter-

ested in the same good objects, caring for what is really important; and each, in his own way, is pursuing some good end. No mean ambition, no poor vanity, no low and mean passions can enter that home. It is a little heaven here below.

You go into another house. The atmosphere is full of fear, hatred, and cruelty. The husband is a brute, the wife and children slaves; or the wife is frivolous and false, and her falsehood poisons the home. Or perhaps one of the children has been misled by bad companions, and he is a source of constant anxiety to the rest.

Every now and then these smouldering hells break out into an eruption of crime, as a sleeping volcano, after long quiet, suddenly vomits forth a destructive fire. We read in the journals, some morning, of a drunken brute kicking his wife to death, or murdering a little child, and a great horror goes out over the community. The hell which was in the man's soul has broken loose, and out of that one black heart, ulcerated with sin, a blackness of darkness has gone forth over the whole community! What a sense of evil has come over us all! In that great horror we see manifested the mysterious pang which belongs to sin. It is not like any other. It is a breaking out of hell.

But wherever *hell* goes, *heaven* goes too. They are side by side in the world, — producing bitter evils; sending also blessed consolations. Where sin abounds, grace more abounds.

I have lately been reading some parts of Dr. Livingstone's last journals in Africa. They are filled with the sense of the miseries inflicted on Africa by the slave trade as it is carried on by the Arabs in the East. Every year whole villages are depopulated, thousands cruelly murdered, multitudes of young girls and young men carried off to the Mohammedan slave-markets. Dr. Livingstone's soul was darkened by the perpetual presence of this foul curse, — the wretchedness caused by this terrific evil, the root of which is human greed and human sensuality. As we read the book, we seem to be alternately in hell and in heaven. We are in hell when we see all these cruelties; we are in heaven when we feel the presence of this noble soul, devoting itself to the redemption of Africa. Here is a life fitly lived! Here is a man who has given himself in pure, disinterested labors to find out the evils and woes of a continent, and to bring the power of the Gospel to bear on it for its rescue. Here is a missionary who shows us again that Christianity is not dead in the world or in the soul of man; but that, in the nineteenth century, as in the first, it can inspire human hearts with an energy of love which reaches the utmost boundaries of self-surrender permitted by the limitations of the human mind. Here is a man who repeats the story of the Apostle Paul: "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the

heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Never, for a moment, did it occur to him to relinquish his work and return home, and rest from his labors with his family. He thought nothing done while anything remained to be done. He had penetrated to the centre of the Gospel; he had passed through the shell of ceremony and creed to its living kernel. He says in his journal, a few weeks before his death, "What is the atonement of Christ but himself, — his own life and death and character, showing the infinite love of God to all his children, and drawing all to himself, not by fear, but by goodness?" With all this energy of devotion to his work, there was no fanaticism or cant, but wisdom and good sense. His burning zeal did not make him narrow; he was a broad, liberal Christian in the best sense. His first object was to interest all good men in the salvation of Africa; his second was to enlarge the boundaries of human knowledge. He gave his life for both objects. And this heaven in the soul of Livingstone diffused itself to those around him. Wherever he went he made friends among the most savage tribes. In him was fulfilled the saying, "Touch not my apostles, do my prophets no harm." No one could harm him, protected as he was by his own generous purpose as by a seven-fold shield.

He overcame evil by good. The fierce tribes of Africa, maddened as they were by centuries of oppression, became mild in the presence of this lonely white man, trusting himself without hesitation in their midst. Wherever he went, he was received with hospitality and dismissed with blessing. He died in the heart of Africa, five hundred miles from the sea, with no one near him but his negro servants. Then was seen the influence which goodness exercises over the human soul. Then was shown again what a heavenly virtue goes out from a heart in which heaven reigns. These poor, ignorant Africans, after carefully collecting their master's papers and instruments, took his body on their shoulders and marched that long weary way through forests and swamps, the wilderness and hostile tribes, till they faithfully delivered their burden at the English settlement on the ocean. Such was the power over these simple hearts of their dead master's character. The heaven in his soul radiated into theirs and lifted them above themselves.

During the past few weeks we have had an accumulation of horrors. The dreadful loss of the ocean steamer, the discovery of the corruption of the revenue service by the whiskey ring, a tragedy in our neighborhood, and recent destructive conflagrations make a mass of evil which recalls the Master's words, "This is the hour of the power of darkness." [1]

[1] This was written in May, 1875.

The *sting* of this sorrow has been the *sin* contained in it. It was so in the loss of the "Schiller," which was caused directly by a standing pecuniary reward offered by the United States Government to the vessel which shall make the quickest passage, though at the risk of the loss of human life. Had it not been for that offer, no captain would have continued running on in a fog, when he knew that a dangerous coast and cruel rocks could not be far off. But had we been able to look upon that scene, amid its terror and suffering, we should no doubt have seen some manifestation of a heavenly strength,—women upheld in peace and composure, helping those who were weaker than themselves. God always sends in such hours some radiance of courage, generosity, care for others, forgetfulness of self, which shows the supremacy of the human soul over outward disaster and outward suffering.

The nation has recently been disgraced by the discovery of a system of corruption reaching through a whole department of the United States Government. Those who are paid by the United States to protect its interests have been bribed to betray it, so that the Government has been obliged carefully to conceal from its own officials its plans for detecting these frauds of the whiskey manufacturers. The system of allowing members of Congress to appoint men to office as a reward for political services has borne its appropriate fruits. These poli-

ticians, as soon as they were appointed, proceeded to plunder the Government which they are paid to serve. The great Republican party, with its glorious record, is like the man in the parable, who fell among thieves. These thieves have left it wounded, stripped of its proud record, and half dead. And yet, though the times are so bad, there remain some upright souls. There are some who have been able to detect and expose and punish these robbers; men who can act without fear or favor. And the great body of the people are ready to support such men. The republic which has conquered slavery and its allies is not to be destroyed by these plunderers of the public treasury. It has fought and defeated the bold highway robbers who took it by the throat and threatened its life; having done that, it will be able, I think, to save itself from the hands of these professional pickpockets, even though they are backed up by the professional politicians.

Thus the hells and heavens are around us, and we pass out of one into another; first being overshadowed by the blackness of hell, and then illuminated by the light of heaven.

I remember how this contrast once came before me when I was travelling on a steamer on the Mississippi River. At one end of the saloon were some professional gamblers, playing cards and filling their conversation with blasphemy. At the other end were some men and women, Methodists, who were singing hymns in a low voice. As I walked

up and down the saloon, I would come now to the singers, and catch a few words of their songs of praise and trust, and then I would pass on to the other end of the room, and hear the profanity and ribaldry of the gamblers; and it seemed to me as though I were walking to and fro between heaven and hell.

The breaking out of hell is quick, violent, abrupt; it suddenly overflows the land with its dark shadow of guilt and sin, and fills all hearts with sadness. It is like the breaking away of a milldam, letting its waters sweep in a broad flood of sudden desolation over many miles of the quiet valley. But heaven comes to us more gently and gradually, like the soft-falling rain, which moistens the soil, and feeds the grass and grain and trees with a quiet power. Sin breaks forth like lightning to shatter and destroy; goodness comes like soft sunshine gently penetrating the earth. When a crime is committed, it is telegraphed over the land, and is in the newspapers, and men are talking of it at once, and all faces gather sadness. But when an act of generosity, of faith, of self-sacrifice, is done, who hears of it? When temptation is resisted and conquered, who telegraphs the notice of it over the country? When, in the depths of the soul, a man gives himself to God, to truth, to righteousness, what city reporters hurry with the news to the papers? "The kingdom of heaven comes not with observation, neither do men say, Lo

here! or Lo there! for it is within you." Yet it may be that in this very hour there is some young man or young woman quietly and calmly deciding to devote all of life to God and to truth; and from that decision there may go forth a power for good greater than the power for evil in the crimes which will be committed to-day, and which will shock us when we read of them to-morrow.

When Jesus was crucified, it appeared as if all the hope of man was to be buried in his grave. Here was the one pure and perfect soul, who had seen the fact that God's love could conquer evil, who had in himself a spiritual force capable of convincing and converting the world to the love and service of goodness; and he was crucified when his work was seemingly just begun. No wonder that, to the minds of his friends, there seemed to be a great darkness over the land from the sixth hour till the ninth. The hells of this world appeared to have broken loose. But Jesus had really finished his work; he had planted good seed; and it had put down its roots and sent up its stalk, and at last had expanded into blossom and fruit, and into other seeds. Or, we may say that to some honest souls he had imparted the leaven of faith. This had not come with observation; it seemed a very little thing. It was leaven hid in three measures of meal; but it worked on and on silently, till the whole mass of the vast Roman Empire, with its twenty provinces and its thirty legions of soldiers,

its imperial court and its majestic religion, was leavened with the truth and love of the Gospel.

God sometimes permits the hell of sin in the soul to break out into the hell of outward crime, in order that its evil may be seen and deeply felt, and so at last be overcome. For many years the system of slavery made a hell in many Southern homes, — a hell of cruelty, licentiousness, and suffering. At last this hell broke out in the Rebellion, and then the evil was clearly seen and conquered. It is often better that sin should show itself as crime, and thus its blackness and poisonous nature be known. When the man of sin is thus revealed, great suffering no doubt arises from its outbreak, — suffering, terror, gloom, — but the air becomes purer afterwards. False disguises are taken away; hypocrisies and self-deceptions are removed; truth sits in judgment, and lies and shams go to their own place.

Jesus Christ came down into the world, says Emanuel Swedenborg, to enable the heavens to conquer the hells. The miseries of this world are permitted by God, to enable man to see and know evil, and freely choose the good. These woes and wrongs are very great; they are purifying us with the fires of sorrow and anguish, breaking our hearts with the sense of irremediable loss, bowing us down with the weight of sin, crushing us beneath the heavy burden of care; but all this is to prepare the way for a new and better life to come.

I once saw in the Navy Yard at Washington the forging of an anchor by a steam hammer weighing between seven and eight tons. I saw the great iron log, a foot thick and twenty feet long, thrust into the dark mound of coal which covered the raging fires. Presently the windlass heaved it up, blinding bright with a white heat, and it was swung upon the anvil, and then a man turning a winch managed the rise and fall of the enormous hammer, which moved softly down its grooves so as to give gentle blows, or fell with crushing weight on the red-hot mass, hammering it into solid consistency. The poor iron, if it could have thought about it, might have considered its lot a hard one. "Why was I taken from my mine, where God had put me, to be melted in a furnace, and then to be thus heated in insufferable fires, and crushed by these terrible blows?" And then it might be answered: "This stern experience is to make you strong, and fit you for a great work. You are thus made tenacious and tough, in order to become a noble anchor, to hold amid the storm the tossing vessel which has drifted among breakers. On its lee will be the shore, over which, a cable's length off, the waves are bursting mast high, white with frightful death to all the crew. But you, O anchor, made strong by this trial, shall hold them safe, because of the strength you have gained in this hell of fire. Your great flukes will cling firm to the bottom, the vessel will ride safely through the storm, held by your

unflinching resistance; and the lives of the men will be as safe as though they were sleeping in their own quiet homes, where their anxious wives look through the windows into the terrible night."

So, perhaps, it will be with us. Thus shall the hammer and fire of God's providence try each of our souls, and make them strong for duties more noble and austere than we can now imagine. We may be fitted to become the anchors by which other souls shall ride safely in the storms of being. So, too, this nation, let us hope, tried by the fire of many a fearful danger, may grow strong and noble and generous; may forget the things behind, and reach out to those before; forget its idolatries of wealth and outward prosperity, its self-love and its foolish boasting, its injustice towards other races and nations, and be fitted for its destiny of becoming the Anchor of Hope to mankind.

XXV.

MORAL MECHANICS AND DYNAMICS.

XXV.

MORAL MECHANICS AND DYNAMICS.

"The spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."

THE parable of the wheels and the living creature within the wheels is a good illustration of the proper union of mechanical and vital forces. Machinery is very important, but it must be directed by mind. There should always be the spirit of the living creature in the wheels. Machines are necessary, but there must be some vital force behind them.

The power of the wheel is the same as that of the lever, with this difference only, that in the wheel, before one lever has ceased to act, another takes its place. Thus a wheel consists of a multitude of levers joined together. When the wheel was invented, a great step forward was taken in human civilization.

But all machines must have a power behind them to move, to guide, to restrain, else the machinery is of no value. I propose to speak of the relations of machinery and vital forces in thought

and life; or the machine in philosophy, morals, politics, and religion.

What a wonderful thing is vital power! In crossing the Atlantic we saw sea-gulls which attended the steamship day and night, on untiring wing, and we were told that they sometimes followed a vessel the whole way across the Atlantic. Consider the immense force in the little body which enables the bird to continue this unceasing flight!

A large part of the kingdom of Holland is from fifteen to twenty feet below high-water mark, or what is called the Amsterdam zero. The surplus water on the surface of the country must therefore be pumped up by numerous large windmills, and poured into the sea at low water by means of a system of canals. To accomplish this, engineers in all parts of the country are in constant telegraphic communication with a central office, from which, as from a brain, orders are sent to open the canal locks here, and close them there, so as to keep the waters everywhere at the proper level. Without such a perfect system Holland might at any time be inundated. But by this complex machinery the inhabitants live safely below the level of the ocean; because the spirit of the living creature is within the wheels; because mind everywhere watches and controls mechanism.

This illustrates the relation between mechanical and vital forces. Machinery must be governed and directed by mind. As long as man governs the

machine, all goes well; but as soon as the machine controls the man, danger begins.

There are apparent exceptions to this. Some machines are ingeniously arranged so as to direct the man who watches them, and tell him what to do. A carpet-loom, for example, will tell the workman when to change the color of the wool. But this is no real exception to our rule, for, after all, it was mind which made and still governs the machine.

The living animal is the most wonderful of machines. Consider the human body, with its mysterious organization, in which the brain, the lungs, the heart, the digestive organs, and the muscular system work harmoniously together for seventy years. The heart beats on, day and night, when we are awake or while we sleep, driving the blood through the minutest capillaries to be oxygenated in the lungs, to feed the brain, and supply nutriment to bone and muscle. The nutritive organs, in silent hidden action, change, by a strange chemistry, food into blood. The arteries again carry to every part of the body the matter which renews its worn tissues and rebuilds its exhausted fibre. All this, and much more, goes on automatically in our body, without our knowing it or having to take any trouble about it. This has led some philosophers to say that man is wholly a machine, only an automaton. But, beside the machinery, there is the marvellous vital power, and the still more marvellous mental power. Some central vital force correlates

and combines, superintends and modulates this complex mechanism; otherwise, instead of going on for seventy years, it could not continue for seventy seconds. For the body is not of unchanging materials like the machines which we make of rigid wood and hard metal; but it is in a constant condition of decay and repair, changing every moment in every molecule. Beside the material particles, there is another power present in every living body, which maintains the perfect equilibrium. For want of a better word, we call this the vital power. This works continually to evolve the type hidden in the germ, and to maintain it, in spite of the antagonism of the chemical and physical forces which are always tending to disintegrate the organization. The spirit of the living creature is in the wheels. In every living body there are both mechanical methods and the dynamic power which continues them in action.

The human mind itself has its wheels, its automatic action, its machinery. When we do not direct and control our thoughts, they flow on of themselves, along certain well-worn grooves which we call the laws of association. A current of ideas is forever flowing through the mind, and what we do is to guide, check, restrain, direct this stream of thoughts. Thoughts come to us, we know not whence. They seem to drop into the mind from some higher world of light, or to rush up darkly from some nether abyss of evil. Imagination spreads

a panorama of visionary beauty before the soul. Memory brings up pictures of past scenes, — the home of our childhood, the loved faces of long ago. They come and go, by some inscrutable machinery of thought. Yet it is not all machinery, for we can detain them or let them go; we can even call them up by force of will. What a curious fact is that which occurs when we are trying to recollect some word or name! The name is not consciously in our mind, but we know it is somewhere hidden amid the abysses of unconscious knowledge. Like an angler who drops his line into a stream, and feels a fish bite, and then loses it again, we almost remember what we want, but not quite. But by force of fixed attention we at last succeed in seizing it. If the mind did not possess this power of controlling and directing its thoughts, if thought was a purely mechanical process, we should be like the insane, who do not possess their thoughts, but are possessed by them. The insane man cannot govern or guide his thoughts; the sane man keeps the reins in his hand, and directs his ideas towards the end which he has in view. Here, again, we have the wheels, and the spirit of the living creature within the wheels.

The difference between a merely mechanical philosophy and a true psychology is this: Mechanical philosophy takes account of the laws of association, of unconscious cerebration, of habit, of imitation, of the strongest motive; but remains blind to

the profoundest mysteries in the mind of man,—the deeply rooted ideas of cause, of freedom, of right and wrong, of unselfish love, of infinite being. It only knows what comes through the senses, not that which is given in the reason itself. It reduces all motives to those of personal gratification and the pursuit of one's own happiness. It ignores the enthusiasm of goodness, of love, of truth, which have inspired the prophets, reformers, and martyrs of all time. A true mental philosophy accepts all the facts of human experience. It sees the mechanism of mind, but it also observes the nobler powers which make man a living soul and a child of God.

Mechanical and dynamic power are also combined in every moral act. A man's goodness is partly mechanical, partly conscious and free. The mechanism of goodness is the habit of doing right, the habit of truthfulness, of honesty, of kindness, of self-control, of pure thoughts, pure speech, pure action. Without such habits there would be no fixed moral character; we should have to make unceasing efforts not to yield to every momentary temptation. Moral progress partly consists in building up habits of goodness; adding to our faith knowledge, and to knowledge prudence, and to prudence zeal, and to zeal fidelity, and to fidelity patience, and to patience charity. It would be a dreadful state of things if we had to make a new effort each moment to do our every-day duties. Without this mechanical part of virtue it is evident

there would be no such thing as fixed character. Edmund Burke gives to this mechanism an unfortunate name, calling these moral habits "prejudices." He says, "Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders the man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice his duty becomes a part of his nature."

This is true; but if this were all, the heroism and glory of goodness would disappear. If it were all a mere habit, if there were no effort, no struggle, no battle, no enthusiastic longing for something better than we have yet attained, that which we most admire in noble characters would come to an end. It was no mere habit of goodness which animated the souls of apostles, prophets, and martyrs; no mechanical goodness which has sent missionaries to Africa and India, which makes us dissatisfied with all present attainment, and "harries man" with the love of the best. The moral machine holds what is already gained, and roots it in character; but it does not go onward to grander achievements. This motive power lies in moral freedom, in obeying the idea of right, the idea of goodness, beauty, purity, which goes before the soul, illuminating life with an ideal hope. This is the spirit of the living creature within the wheels.

The same machinery and the same ideality are to be found in literature, art, science, politics, and religion. In literature there is a certain habit of expression common to each period, commonplaces of language and style which all writers adopt. Habit and imitation give a certain mannerism which marks an epoch. The poets at one period imitate Byron, at another Tennyson or Longfellow, at another Browning. Then comes some original writer who creates a new world, marks out a new path, and opens other fields to those who succeed him. Without the machine many good and useful writers would have no style with which to express themselves, for most of our vocabulary comes to us from the books and the speakers around us. But without the original ideas which are always falling anew out of some higher heaven of thought, literature would consist of vain repetitions, vapid and tiresome commonplaces, and would die of weariness and exhaustion.

We hear a good deal about the machine in politics. Political life needs and must have some kind of machinery. Politics in our day are carried on by the antagonism of parties. Each party ought to represent, and in its origin does represent, some great idea. One party represents progress, another security; one stands for freedom, the other for order; one to keep safe all the good already attained, the other to go on to something still better. One party believes in reform, the other in conservatism.

By their proper balance the welfare of the State is maintained, as the planets are moved in their regular paths by the antagonistic forces of Nature. One party is the centrifugal force, the other the centripetal. Each citizen joins the party which seems to him at the time to be doing the most important work, not because it is perfectly faultless, but because he thinks it on the whole the best. Each party is a machine, and must have its mechanism, its party leaders, newspapers, committees, caucuses, otherwise it could not act with efficiency. It would not be an army, but a mob.

But sometimes it happens that the machine in a party gets the better of the ideas. The real use of the machine is to cause the ideas to prevail. But, forgetting this, the machine thinks it is for itself, and that the whole purpose of the party is to keep the machine in power. The officials, paid to do work for the whole people, are appointed and kept in office to reward them for service done to a single party. Members of Congress, instead of studying public questions, devote their time to securing their own re-election. Caucuses are packed to misrepresent the sentiments of voters. Party leaders regard themselves as clothed with despotic authority to reward and punish those who support or oppose them. The Federal Government interferes in State elections, and once, it is said, has gone so far as to cause letter-carriers to scatter free of charge circulars asking citizens to withdraw their patronage

from a newspaper which the authorities disliked. When a political machine thus undertakes to govern the people instead of serving them, the life is evidently deserting the body. It has lost the ideas which gave it life. Dead mechanism has taken the place of living enthusiasm. Such a party may live some time on its past reputation, just as they say a railroad train on a straight and level road will run about five miles after the steam has been cut off. But the motive power is gone, and unless the party be reformed its end is sure. All honest men therefore within its ranks should make it their first object to reform it, even by the most heroic treatment.

The machine in religion consists of creed and ritual, church organization and church methods. In religion we need both organization and inspiration. The right relation of the two was given by Jesus when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Lord's day both belong to the machinery of religion. When they are regarded as a means for the elevation of man, they are helpful; when considered to be ends in themselves, they become a burden. The Jewish leaders in the time of Jesus exalted the machine of religion above its spirit, and so their religion became mechanical, formal, and dead. They had a mechanical Sabbath, mechanical prayers, mechanical fasting, mechanical alms-giving. Religion was a routine of outward

works, with no soul in it. Jesus, the boldest, and at the same time the wisest of reformers, brought back men from the letter of religion to the spirit. "Do good to man on the Sabbath," he virtually said, "and you are keeping it aright. Give without ostentation. If you deny yourself from a sense of duty, make light of it, and do not parade your self-denial. If you pray, let your prayers be chiefly private, in the depths of the soul, not a ritual service, not verbal repetitions, but loving worship of the Father in spirit and truth." And under his heavenly influence a new tide of inspiration arose in human hearts. God, eternity, and immortality came near; and the spirit of the living creature was again within the wheels.

If we have faith, inspiration, and conviction, organization will follow; but the best organization in the world will not produce life. The soul creates the body, the body does not create the soul. Ritual does not produce religion, but religion produces ritual. How easily we organize when we have any living idea around which to organize! We need not be anxious about our machine, as if we could not at any time make another. Let us only have faith in the soul, in God, in duty, in immortality, and churches will spring up almost of themselves. "Destroy this temple," said Jesus, "and I will raise it up in three days." The Temple and the whole majestic worship of Jerusalem went to the ground, but in their place arose Christian

cathedrals and minsters, wonderful and original architecture, new songs, hymns, litanies, and liturgies, the dome of St. Peter's and the spire of Strasburg.

> "For, out of Thought's interior sphere,
> These wonders rose to upper air."

There is always a tendency in religion to relapse into mechanism, — to multiply ceremonies and lose the spirit. Ever, as the winter of unbelief chills the soul, and the river of religious life sinks in its channel, the ice of forms accumulates along its shores. Then the Lord sends a new prophet, to whom religion is not a form, but a reality; one who sees with his own eyes God as a heavenly presence in nature and life; who has the vision and the faculty divine. God never leaves himself without a witness in the world. He sends these inspired souls when the times require them, rising up early and sending them. They come in a long procession: Paul, Augustine, Bernard, Savonarola, Huss, Wickliffe, Luther; and, in later days, Fox the Quaker, Wesley the Methodist, Channing, Parker, Arthur Stanley, Frederick Robertson. This is the true apostolic succession. Such men are divinely ordained to keep religion alive in the world when the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so. These men bring us back from dusty books and dry forms to the open vision of a new heaven and a new earth. They are made priests of God,

not by the imposition of human hands, but by the descent of the Holy Spirit; not after the law of a carnal commandment, but by the power of an endless life. They see God face to face; see him as Wordsworth saw him in Nature: —

> "A presence far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
> And the round ocean and the living air.
> A motion and a spirit which impels
> All living things."

They see him in Christ, as our own Whittier saw him, when he said: —

> "Our friend, our brother, and our Lord!
> What shall thy service be?
> Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
> But simply following Thee!"

Such a vision of God comes to the hero, reformer, and patriot struggling for truth and right against overwhelming odds; to Wilberforce and Clarkson, to Garrison and Charles Sumner. They also were God's prophets, though they may not have known it; making his righteousness and justice once more a reality in the world. So, too, every upright man and conscientious woman, to whom duty speaks with a divine voice, and who are faithful in the least, are prophets of God. Such new prophets are not recognized when they come; often they are unpopular, derided, and hated. But they have a sweet content within; they are cheerful, full of

hope and joy. They have no hatred in their hearts for their enemies, for their enemies have done them no real harm.

This is living religion, which makes all things new. It is the life of God in the soul of man. The wheels of our existence drag heavily till we see something divine in nature, in history, in every good cause, in every good and right action, in honest work, in patient endurance, in brave conflict against wrong. How happy we are when glimpses of this heavenly vision come to us! Sometimes there dawns in the soul the sense of an infinite tenderness, the consciousness that God is not far off, but near; that all we think and do and say aright comes from his help. In the depths of our sorrow, in the loneliness of our bereavement, when disappointment and failure meet us, we wonder that we are somehow still upheld, and we know then that it is because we are indeed God's children. We feel in the midst of our follies, faults, and sins, that when we repent he will forgive us and help us to do better. We may, perhaps, hardly know whether we are Christians or not, but we have come to know and love God. He is our Father and our Friend, and that is enough. This life in the soul makes light. We may not have a large belief, but we have some solid knowledge born of our own experience. There is a fountain within, a well of water, welling up into everlasting life. And we do not feel constrained or hampered by this faith, but

more free than ever, for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. These convictions give unity and purpose to life, and make it worth while to live. They give us sympathy with our fellow-men; for we see that, though men may differ in moral culture, they can yet have the same profound convictions. We know that we have passed from death to life when we love the brethren; when we have renounced cynicism, unlearned contempt, and call no man common or unclean. We know that there is a divine life in the universe, that no merely mechanical theory can explain creation. Chemistry in its finest analysis does not reach this life. No theory of evolution can do more than state its method,—it does not account for the origin and continuance of the living world. It sees the universal law, but not that which supports this vast order. Above all things, below all things, around all things, within all things, is the divine spirit, and we have found him to be our Father and our Friend.

This religion is both natural and supernatural, for it finds God in Nature, and yet sees in him a power above Nature. When we enter into communion with him, our soul passes into a higher life. Then we attain

> "that blessed mood
> In which the burden of the mystery
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened; that serene and blessed mood

In which the affections gently lead us on;
When, with an eye made quiet with the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We look into the life of things."

Then all things are ours, for all things, we know, are working together for good. Life is good; death is also good. All is discipline, education, the passage from sense to soul.

XXVI.

TRANSITION PERIODS.

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TRANSITION PERIODS;

WHEN PEOPLE ARE NEITHER ONE THING NOR THE OTHER.

MY subject is Transition Periods. It is illustrated by the little parable of Jesus about the children in the market-place, which we have given to us in Matthew xi. and Luke vii. In the latter place it reads thus: "Whereunto, then, shall I liken the children of this generation; and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying: We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say: Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of all her children." This little picture which Jesus gives

us of children's plays is an illustration of many things, to some of which we may give attention.

It shows us how uniform are the tendencies of human nature in all ages and times. Jesus, passing through the market of Nazareth, or Cana, saw the children playing their games, just as they do now. The little Syrian boys and girls belonging to the great Semitic race, living eighteen hundred years ago, amid Asiatic customs and scenery, were just such little children as you and I saw on the Common yesterday. They played the same kind of games, imitating the customs of grown people; and as little children now play soldier, play horse and driver, so they then played weddings and funerals. Jewish weddings and funerals were conducted with much ceremony, with processions and pomp, and so caught the eyes of the children who stood watching the nuptial cortège or solemn burial march, and, as soon as it went by, began to say to each other, "Come, let us play wedding," and then they pretended to make the music to which the others were to dance; or, "Let us play funeral," and then they went gravely through all the customs of mourning. But little children were sometimes cross in those days, as they are now, and so refused to play either one or the other game, and their companions could not please them, do what they would. This little trait of childlike nature, breaking out of the solemn distant past, out of another civilization, race, continent, age, affects us like a song heard in youth, like the

fragrance of a flower that grew in the garden where we roamed in infancy. I once was walking along the ruined passages of an old Norman castle, and while thinking of the fierce race that manned those walls, six hundred years before, I came suddenly upon a child's plaything lying on the gray stone. Goethe has a lovely poem, in which he represents a traveller who visits the ruins of a Greek temple, and finds a mother and infant sitting thereon. Her hut was made of the carved fragments of the architrave or frieze, and while the stranger was admiring the elaborate stones, broken columns, and fragments of art, the mother was talking a mother's foolish, loving talk to her sleeping boy. So this little allusion to the children of the day of Jesus, and their plays and quarrels (coming in the midst of that greatest event of time), shows us how the life of nature renews itself evermore amid all the changes of human history.

This passage also shows the habit of Christ of taking illustrations from common things — from every-day life! If a minister, to-day, should illustrate a religious truth by a boy's game at foot-ball, it would be thought singular, if not undignified. But Christ saw nothing undignified in human nature or human life. In his teachings there is nothing conventional, nothing formal. No fact in God's world is to him common or unclean.

This saying of Jesus, moreover, shows how much easier it is for good men, though differing in ideas,

tastes, and methods, to agree in a mutual respect and sympathy, than for self-willed men to form any permanent union. How unlike in character were Jesus and John the Baptist; but they had a common aim. It was to do God's will; to make the world better. So they felt a mutual respect for each other. John was an ascetic; he neither ate nor drank, like other men; he practised abstinence; he lived in the wilderness; an austere prophet, he denounced war against tyrants and all evil-doers. Jesus was not abstinent from human pleasures; he came eating and drinking like other men; not retiring into a desert, but going to weddings, to the suppers of rich men or poor, to the houses of his friends or those of strangers. He preached the gospel, not the law; he preached faith, hope, love, courage. He set forth God as a Father, not as a judge. So he seemed to be very different from John. If he increased, John must decrease. Their methods of work were not alike; their spirit was different; their missions did not harmonize. But yet, because their deepest purpose was the same, John honored Jesus, and Jesus honored John. John had the nobleness to recognize a superior greatness in Jesus, though he did not comprehend it. There was a real union between them. John said of Jesus, "Behold! the Lamb of God. I am not worthy to untie his shoe strings. He must increase, I must decrease." Jesus said of John, "Of all men born of women" — that is, prophets by

nature, in the order of natural genius and endowment — "there is none greater than John."

He was the last of the prophets of that great race who kept alive the spirit and power of Judaism amid the formalism of the ritualists and dogmatists. He was the transition from the Law to the Gospel; the culminating point, and also the vanishing point, of the old covenant.

An obscure text makes Jesus say that "from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." This passage probably means that John made the turning-point from the Law to the Gospel. For Law lives by force; the Gospel, by love. The Law compels; the Gospel attracts. The principle of the Old Testament was command, — authority resting on the sanctions of reward and punishment. The motive of the Gospel is the love of God taking the initiative, — blessing us, that we, in return, may bless one another.

There are three great periods in religion: —

1. The period of Law; in which the motive is hope and fear, — hope of reward and fear of punishment.

2. The period of the Gospel; in which the motive is the love of what is good without regard to personal results.

3. The transition period; which is that of John the Baptist; when there is the sight of the Gospel,

and yet the terror of the Law behind it; in which men, though they love God a little, are still afraid of him.

This transition period is indicated by Jesus in that phrase which was probably not understood by the disciples, and therefore imperfectly reported: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Such a transition period has frequently appeared in the Church. Perhaps the majority of Christians are now living, not under the dominion of Law, nor yet in the kingdom of heaven, but in the dispensation of John the Baptist. Both Orthodox Christians and Liberal Christians find it hard to escape wholly from law. They believe in the Heavenly Father. They believe in his mercy, in his forgiving love. But still they think that they are not good enough to come to God with perfect freedom and entire trust. They think they must somehow fit themselves to be Christians. They are a little doubtful whether they are good enough to go to heaven, or good enough to meet their friends in heaven.

Many strict believers show their allegiance to John the Baptist by their doctrines of the wrath of God, of eternal damnation, of a judgment which is to separate all men into two classes, saints and sinners. This makes death to them an awful thing, and adds a gloom to life, and an uncertainty in regard to their own fate and that of those dear to them.

More liberal Christians have not these fears, but they have those of another kind. They think they have to earn their salvation by good works, and as our best goodness never amounts to much, they have no full confidence that they shall obtain it by any merit of theirs. They believe firmly in a law of moral retribution, applying to this life as to every other. They believe in being saved by doing their duty, and as their consciences are somewhat sensitive, they are by no means sure of their salvation. Thus, neither of these classes is living wholly under the Gospel or under the Law, but under a dispensation half-way between the two.

But half-way convictions are not very satisfactory, and the remedy for this evil is to put both the Law and the Gospel in their right place. We cannot dispense with either, but we wish to distinguish between their sphere and their work.

Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it in love. We are all under law. As a man sows, so shall he reap. There is a strict and infallible retribution here and hereafter for our conduct. As we do right we go up; as we do wrong we go down. This is true in this world and in all worlds.

Therefore, as regards our outward position, our outward privileges, our outward situation in the universe, we have what we have earned and have fitted ourselves for, and we are saved by works. We rise or fall according to moral laws as certain in their operation as the law of gravitation.

But as regards our inward state, our inward relation to God and to man, we are saved by the Gospel and by faith in the Gospel.

Those who live under the Gospel and believe in Christ cease to be anxious about their position in the universe. Wherever they shall be it is all right and good. They will be inwardly happy anywhere, for they will be in communion with God. They will have their Heavenly Father and his love in all worlds. They can say, with David, "If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, thou art there also." If they are to have nothing outwardly, they will possess all things inwardly. If they have to suffer hereafter, they know that it will not be from the anger of God, but from his love; because they need to suffer, and that this is best for them. But of one thing they are sure, that nothing shall separate them from the love of God, — neither affliction, nor distress, nor angels, nor devils, nor heaven, nor hell, nor things present, nor things to come.

This puts an end to the time of John the Baptist, and to the Transition Period. It puts the Law in its right place and the Gospel in its right place. The Law applies to external conditions of outward attainment, position, character, and desert. The Gospel applies to the inward life of the heart and soul, to its deepest convictions, trusts, and joys. Our life is hid with Christ in God, and so all is well with us while we trust in him. Our outward

destiny depends on ourselves, and results from our fidelity to duty, to truth, and to law.

The Gospel produces inward unity of faith and purpose. It gives us unity with ourselves, and till we have that unity we can be satisfied neither with ourselves nor with others. How difficult to please those who are not at one with themselves!

If a man is not at peace with himself by being at peace with God, nothing suits him. He is like the children in the parable. Their companions said to them, "Come, let us play a wedding!" No, they did not wish to play that. "Then let us play a funeral!" No, they did not wish to play that, either. Until we have some inward union, there can be no real union with others.

So, when John came, — an austere, stern man, — teaching retribution, rousing the whole moral nature, stirring the conscience to its depths, people said: "He is a fanatic! He is mad! He is crazy! He has a devil! How singular, to live in a desert! How improper, to preach out of doors! He is responsible for the lives of the people whom he has carried out there. Religion is a rational thing. I don't believe in such enthusiasm. We ought to be moderate in all things. Religion is not sent in order to frighten people: it is to make them happy. I believe that religion never was designed to make our pleasure less. This John the Baptist is a mere demagogue."

Then Jesus comes. He is not a fanatic. He allows his disciples to walk on the Sabbath, and to pluck corn when they are hungry. He heals a sick man on the Sabbath day. He enjoins no strict ceremonies, no hours of prayer, no fasts, no washings. He goes to a wedding and makes wine; he visits all sorts of people, rich and poor; he lays stress on the spirit, the motive, very little on forms of any kind. He will certainly satisfy those who objected to John; so you think. Not at all. They say of him: "He is self-indulgent, a wine-bibber, not dignified enough; he is too lax altogether. Did you hear of his telling them to forgive a woman caught in an act of sin? He talks with improper people! What is the world coming to? All the landmarks are breaking down between the respectable classes and the lower classes. Do you call such a man as that a religious teacher? I call him a mere man of the world. He preached the other day against the Pharisees, who are the most respectable people we have among us. He must be a bad man, and he ought to be punished."

The difficulty was this: they did not like the austerity of John, because they were not ready to repent of their sins and begin a life of holiness. They did not like the gospel gentleness of Jesus, because they feared that if the terrors of the law were taken away, there would be nothing left. They believed in the law, but did not like it. They liked the gospel, but did not believe in it.

There are just such people nowadays. They do not like Orthodoxy because it is too severe in its demands; but still they believe in it. They like liberal Christianity, but they do not believe in it. They believe in terror and punishment as the only motives which can influence men; but they do not like them. They like the Sermon on the Mount, and the Good Samaritan, and the Prodigal Son, but do not believe in them. They think something stronger necessary.

The difficulty is in themselves. There is no unity within, so nothing suits them. If they would earnestly follow what they believe, obey the law, be good Orthodox men, or good Liberals, — by either path they would reach the full light of the Gospel and be something better by and by.

When a man's conscience is pulling him one way and his heart is pulling him another way, nothing pleases him. If you ask him to do his duty, and tell him what he ought to be, his conscience assents, but he does not like it. If, on the other hand, you make excuses for him, and tell him he is all right, then his feelings are soothed, but his conscience remonstrates, because he knows what you say is untrue. Wilfulness is thus always ill at ease, and has no inward unity so long as any conscience is left. Men at discord in themselves can have no lasting unity with each other. They may be united for a time by common interests, but there is continual danger of a rupture.

The union of good men is internal, though there may be outward differences. The union of wilful men may be external, but there are always inward differences. The children of folly may unite for a common purpose, may be allied together as Herod and Pilate were allied against Christ. Pirates may join for plunder; the children of this world, for power, pleasure, and earthly gain. But there is no inward union, and as soon as the outward advantage of alliance ceases, the partnership is dissolved. But good men, though separated outwardly, are inwardly at one. They belong to one invisible and indivisible church. By and by they will come together outwardly, and see eye to eye. The inevitable logic of faith and reason will at last unite them, and then wisdom shall be justified of all her children. John the Baptist will understand Christ; Barnabas will comprehend Paul; Fénelon and Martin Luther, Athanasius and Arius, Dr. Channing and Dr. Beecher, will recognize each other's worth, and bless God together for what each has accomplished for the kingdom of heaven.

So shall wisdom be at last justified of all her children. So shall all good men, sincerely desiring to do right, be found at last to be walking together on the same road toward the best things. He who is faithful in the least will discover that he belongs to that family of which Christ is the head, and he will have for his brothers and sisters the great and the good of all climes and of every age. He will

be a member of the society of great intellects, the cherubim with many eyes, and great lovers, the seraphim hiding themselves with their wings from the intense glory of God's throne. Wisdom is not sectarian nor bigoted; she has a large church, and many children, and is justified of them all.

XXVII.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

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"His countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions."

DANTE, in his vision of hell, sees there one whom he does not name, but who, he says, "made the great refusal." It has been supposed that Dante refers to the young man who had this invitation from Jesus and sorrowfully declined it.

It *was* the great refusal; it was a lost opportunity, and such an opportunity as few men have had in this world. There must have been some great capacity for good in this youth. It appeared in the ardor with which he came running to Jesus; in the reverence he showed for the goodness of the Teacher. He was a ruler, a man of position; but he did not hesitate to come to this village Rabbi to seek the way to the spiritual life. He could also honestly say he had kept the commandments from his youth. But he had no pride on that account; he longed for something more than this negative goodness. All these were marks of a disposition which united

aspiration, modesty, reverence for goodness, and fidelity in conduct. And we are told that Jesus, who had the power of reading character, loved him, and gave him the opportunity of going up higher. He told him to sell what he had and give to the poor, and follow him, and he should have treasure in heaven. It was not because it was a rule, in joining the society of Jesus, to renounce one's possessions, as it is in the monastic orders; for we find that many of the disciples of Jesus continued to keep their property. But no doubt it was because Jesus saw, in this particular instance, that such a renunciation was necessary; that in this case the young man's mind must not be distracted by the care of his property; he must be able to devote himself wholly to his new work. The love which Jesus felt for this youth, and which beamed from his eyes so that the disciples noticed it and recorded it, suggests to us that if he had accepted the offer and obeyed Jesus, he might have become another apostle like John; he might have left us a fifth gospel, with some precious additional insights into the Master's mind; have recorded for us some of the many sayings now forever gone. Thus when he turned away it *was* "the great refusal," — one of those lost opportunities which never return, and are lamented always.

Dante has put the young man into his "Inferno;" but God is more merciful than Dante; so let us hope that this good youth, who made one great

mistake, has long since been welcomed by Jesus in the other world, and allowed to atone for this unfortunate decision, or indecision. For I suppose he did not so much decide against following Jesus; he was only unable to make up his mind to follow him. Certainly his punishment was sufficient without his being sent to hell. Never can he wholly forget, even in heaven, that lost opportunity; never cease to sorrow for that irrevocable hour.

Other examples of a similar kind are to be found in the New Testament. There is the instance of Nicodemus, who could come by night to Jesus, but could not make up his mind to avow his discipleship by day. There was the case of Felix, who said to Paul that when he had a convenient season he would call for him. Two years passed, and the convenient season did not come; and then Felix lost his place and returned to Rome. Think of it! What would we not give to have an opportunity to talk with Paul at any time during two whole years! That was another lost opportunity.

In fact, every new step forward in life offers an opportunity which may be accepted or refused. Lowell truly says: —

"Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, parts the sheep upon the right;
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and the light."

Every cause, every work, every day that comes, offers opportunities, but always on conditions. We must give up something to obtain something else. We must be prepared to make renunciations if we would gain advantages. We may either leave all to follow the new Messiah, or we may say, "Go thy way; at a more convenient season I will attend to thee."

These opportunities come, not only to individuals, but to nations, to churches, to communities.

I recollect hearing Dr. Solger, a man of much insight, say, in a historical lecture, that the Lutheran Reformation, if it had been accepted by the Catholic Church, would have saved Europe five hundred years of relapse and loss. Many of the best Catholics wished to come to some terms with the Reformation; to reform the abuses of the Church and remain united with the reformers. But the opportunity passed by, and the results of that lost opportunity were the desolating religious wars in Germany and France, the Inquisition in Spain, Bartholomew massacres, the cruelties of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, extremes of thought on either side, Protestants missing the good there is in the Roman Church, Roman Catholics losing the good in the Protestant Church. That one opportunity accepted would, as Dr. Solger said, have put Europe five hundred years further forward than it is to-day.

So in this country, in 1820, at the time of the Missouri Compromise, this nation had the power to

resist the extension of slavery, and say, "Hitherto thou shalt come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Had it done so, we might have been spared the long and bitter antislavery struggle, the woes and wrongs and losses of the Civil War, and a thousand other miseries and sins. It was a lost opportunity.

So, too, when the German armies had defeated the French Emperor at Sedan, it would have been a great gain for humanity had the king of Prussia made peace and withdrawn his armies, and said, "The dynasty has fallen with which I made war. My quarrel was with the Emperor; I have no quarrel with France." If he had done that, there would be no necessity to-day for France and Germany to spend their life-blood in maintaining great standing armies. The French are a people of sentiment, capable of recognizing generous treatment, and France and Germany would now be friends, instead of watching each other with mutual suspicion and hatred. That was another lost national opportunity.

Providence sometimes allows a vast deal to depend on the course taken by a single man. How much the first Napoleon might have done, after he had defended France against Europe and made her safe and strong, if he had then ceased from war and devoted his grand intelligence and power to advancing peaceful industry and national progress! That was a lost opportunity.

When our friends leave us for another world, how often we say, "Why did I not do differently during all those years when I had them? Why was I not more considerate of their feelings, more attentive to their needs, more thoughtful of ways in which I could have made them happy? Why was I so cold and selfish, so hard and overbearing, so irritable, so determined to have my own way? Why was I not kinder? Why did I not appreciate more their goodness? Alas! I see it all now when it is too late! How often I wounded the feelings of that dear friend, who was to me so true and faithful, so loving and tender, so conscientious and pure! Too late! too late! If it were all to do again, how different my conduct would be!"

When we ourselves pass away, leaving our work undone, or badly done, will there be needed any greater punishment than to see what good we might have done and did not, or what lasting evil we have caused which we might have avoided?

Mrs. Oliphant, in one of her stories, has described how an old lady, whose only fault was a modest self-indulgence, saw after she had entered the other world what a wrong she had done in not remembering in her will one for whom she ought to have provided. The writer tells how the old lady tried to come back and rectify her error, but only succeeded in frightening persons by her helpless apparition. The story illustrates what a terrible punishment we may find it, to be enlightened

hereafter in regard to our sins of omission and commission.

I am afraid that if persons are to suffer hereafter for not making a just and good disposition of their property by will, there will be a great deal of misery in the other world. Too often a man's testament is just what the name implies, — it is his *will;* not his conscience, not his reason, not his heart, only his will. He says, "Shall I not do what I will with my own?" He forgets that he must answer for the use of this power, as of all others. He seeks to find some way by which he can still hold his property after death. This feeling produced primogeniture and entails in England, and those abuses which the law calls by the expressive word *mortmain,* — "the dead hand." The statutes of mortmain were intended to prevent the very abuse which Jesus denounced as practised by the Pharisees, who allowed persons to alienate their property from their relations by dedicating it to the Temple, and calling it "corban," — that is, a gift to God. Dying persons were persuaded by priests that their sins would be forgiven if they gave their property to the Church and disinherited their heirs. There was at one time danger that a large part of the land in England would go into the possession of the Church, and the English law of mortmain declares that land must not be given for such purposes by a deed or will executed by a dying man. He must give his land for charitable objects in his lifetime, or not at all.

But every day brings to each of us opportunities which we may neglect or never notice. We have an opportunity of speaking in behalf of truth and justice, and we are silent. We decline to take our stand against public prejudice or popular opinion. We are afraid of being opposed or ridiculed, or of being out of the fashion, and so we do nothing when we ought to act, and the opportunity goes by. We are like the man who hid his pound in a napkin and buried it in the earth, and said, "Lord, I was afraid!"

Let us do what we can, and we shall not be followed into the other world by our lost opportunities bearing witness against us in the great day of account and retribution. Every day brings some opportunity. Every outward call may be an opportunity. Every movement of conscience is an opportunity. And remember that we are never called to do more than is in our own power. If we can say, "I have done what I could," that is enough.

But how shall we remember to do what we can? Who ever does all he can? We are not always in the right mood, not always in the best temper; the power may be there, but the spirit be wanting. How, then, shall we learn to use opportunities, and not neglect them, not pass them by?

Here, as ever, comes in the need and the help of Christian faith. Faith not only leads to work, but the effort to work leads to faith. The deepest religious experience is born of the strongest

moral purpose. Whenever men seriously try to do right, they feel the need of help from on high. If a man should say to me, "I do not believe in religion, I believe in morality; if I do right, that I think is enough," I should answer: "I think so too. Now, go to work in good earnest to do right, and to be good. Begin every day with a determination not to omit any opportunity. Watch and see if you fail. Do not drift, but steer. Be thoroughly moral, and I think you will find religion a necessary help to enable you to meet your own standard. You will find that the sense of God's presence, his influence, his readiness to give you good thoughts and good inspirations will lead directly to the best morality."

One purpose of Jesus was to show us that we can have this help, have it now, have it always. His gospel is the revelation to the soul of an ever-present love, waiting to be gracious. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened." Every one! — then it is a *law* that prayer is answered. It is not a divine caprice, but a divine method, sure and certain as any law of Nature. The law of gravitation is not more unerring and constant than the law which ordains that whenever one cries to the Father, asking spiritual help, the spiritual help is given.

But you may say, "Prayer is not always answered. What became of the tens of thousands of prayers offered for the life of Garfield? What became of the prayer of Christ himself, in his agony, praying that the cup might pass from him if it were possible, and if God so willed? How can we say that all prayer is answered?"

I reply that when we pray for bodily life or any outward good, as for example for the recovery of a sick child, there is the same condition to the prayer that Jesus put into his own: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Prayer, even then, may avail, and greatly avail, but not always in the way we expect. The best answer we may receive to a prayer for any outward blessing may be an apparent refusal.

When Augustine, a youth, was proposing to go to Rome, his mother, the pious Monica, prayed that he might be kept from going there, because she dreaded the temptations of the capital for her son. But he went, and was converted to Christianity by Ambrose. So, in his Confessions, he says, "Thou, Lord, didst refuse to my mother the outward form and body of her prayer, but didst grant to her the inward heart of her prayer. For that which she really asked was that my spiritual life might be made safe; and it *was* saved by my going to Rome."

But when Jesus says, without limitation or condition, "Ask, and ye shall receive," he is speaking

of prayer for spiritual help. For he uses the illustration of a father, who will not refuse bread to a starving child, and says, "How much more will your Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

If, then, we have these opportunities to meet every day; if we are so apt to pass them by; if it is so hard to be in the right spirit; if, without such a right spirit, we are sure to do what we ought not, and to omit to do what we ought,— then we are like the hungry child, who needs food and cannot get it for himself. Will not God certainly feed our soul with inward strength if we have enough faith to go to him? I believe that this is a universal law. I do think that any one, wishing to do right and finding it hard to do so,— one who tries and tries again, resolves and resolves again,— will certainly find himself lifted to a higher plane by simply looking up and saying, "Oh, my Father! feed my soul with thy light and thy love." He will find that somehow or other he is able to say the right thing at the right time; to do the right thing; to be in the right tone and temper. Whereas before he was apt to be irritable, now he is patient; before he was thoughtless, now he is considerate; before he was forgetful of others, now he remembers them. There has come into the depths of his soul, without his knowing how, a power which directs his thoughts and words and actions aright. And this is what is meant by the influence of the Spirit.

It is felt in its results and fruits — love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

If, then, we do not wish to have a life filled with lost opportunities, we must be every day prepared to meet them. And as we cannot prepare ourselves sufficiently by any amount of discipline or any strength of determination, we have a right to believe that by looking up and opening our soul to God he will give us the power of meeting each opportunity aright.

Without this faith, how apt we are to postpone and put off any difficult work; to say, "I will do it at a more convenient season, when I feel more like doing it, when I can think what I had better say and do." But with this confidence in an ever-present help, we can meet every occasion, and we shall be able to understand the meaning of the Christian paradox, "When I am weak, then am I strong;" or that other saying of the Apostle, "The life I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God."

For here in truth, to my mind, lies the emphasis and essence of Christ's teaching. He leads us, through the law to the gospel; through duty to trust; through work to prayer; through the sense of responsibility to the sense of dependence. Christian faith is neither doctrine nor ritual; not a system of ethics nor an emotion of piety; not profession or form. It is the law of God, fulfilled by

faith in the love of God. It is inflowing strength with which to do our daily work. It is the happy consciousness that God is around us with his perpetual care; beneath us with his supreme power; above us with his providential blessing; within us by his constant inspiration.

This faith is saving faith; it saves us from doubt and despair. It fills the heart with hope. It causes each day to dawn serene and peaceful, each night to close quiet and full of content. Trials may come, will come; lonely hours; the loss of those we love; disappointed hopes. But with these trials strength also will come with which to bear them. More than this, — we may go wrong; we may neglect and forget opportunities; we may forget to pray; and then we shall find ourselves relapsing into the old and dreary routine of weakness and sin. But with this difference, — that we know how to overcome the difficulty; we know the way back. We know that we have only to turn round and begin again, with a greater humility and distrust of ourselves; with a greater trust in God, and that the sense of his forgiving love will descend once more into our hearts. For forgiveness, too, comes, not by caprice, but by law. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Observe, it is not said, "he is merciful," but "he is faithful and just." It is, then, a law that when we are willing to look our sins in the face, and see ourselves as we are, with that

sight and confession of evil we are again helped out of the evil into good.

This is the sum and substance of personal religion. This is the "life hid with Christ in God." It is the steady purpose of doing what we can in the direction of duty, and the steady trust in God for power with which to do it. Either of the two, alone, is not enough. But joined together they are sufficient to lift us above the danger of lost opportunities.

XXVIII.

THE ETHICS OF THE BALLOT-BOX.

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"*And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias.*"

THIS proceeding, recorded in the Book of Acts, was probably the first example of voting we have in Christendom. Some persons think that this was not voting, but drawing a name from an urn. But in that case it would not have been said that "*they* gave forth their *lots*," for only one person could have drawn a single name from an urn. It is, therefore, the opinion of Mosheim and others that voting is here meant.

If so, voting was considered, in this first instance, as a matter of conscience and religion. They wished to choose a man whose heart God would approve; they wished to elect a good man, and they prayed to God to enable them to do so.

It is a duty to put religion into politics, and conscience into the ballot. The church and pulpit should abstain from party politics; but all the more

should it lay down the principles by which voting ought to be directed. "What rules should an honest man adopt in voting?" is a question very proper for the pulpit. And as we are now on the eve of an election, I propose to consider this question. I have little to say of particular parties or of particular persons. But of parties in general I must say a word.

In most free countries there are two great parties constantly contending for power, and most persons, in order to make their vote effectual, must select one or the other. When it is quite certain that one or the other of two parties must win, and the election is by a plurality, it is evident that I might almost as well stay at home as vote for a third party or third candidate. If, indeed, I think that the most important issue is represented by this third party or its candidate, then it may be my duty to vote for it, year after year, without any expectation of immediate victory, but in the hope of seeing the small party gradually becoming larger, and at last successful. Thus, for example, I voted, from 1840 to 1860, first for the Liberty party, then for the Free Soil party, and then for the Republican party, — voting in the minority for twenty years, in that

> "friendless contest, lingering long,
> Through weary day and weary year,"

till victory, born of endurance, came to us in 1860 in the election of Abraham Lincoln.

But usually we must vote for one of two tickets, for one of the two is sure to be elected. What considerations ought to influence us in selecting our party or our candidate?

The first rule is *always to vote* when we have a right to do so. If republican institutions fail, it will be because the good men and wise men and educated men fail to do their duty by taking part in politics. Bad men, who make a trade of politics, are sure to vote, and to induce others to do so. If educated men stay at home, and the ignorant are led to the polls by crafty demagogues, who is responsible for bad government?

I should like to see it made disgraceful not to vote. I should like to have public opinion condemn those who, instead of voting, keep at their business or their pleasure, or who sit at home reading and do nothing for public order, freedom, and good government. All drinking saloons and places of amusement should be closed. I would have election day made as sacred as Sunday. And every man should not only vote himself, but should also see that his employees have proper opportunity given them to deposit their vote.

I often go to the polls attended by some man who works for me. He usually votes one way, and I the other. "Why not both pair off, and stay at home?" you say. Because then *both of us* would neglect our duty. I should be as sorry not to have him go, as not to go myself. I should be sorry to

have him vote my ticket in order to please me. I prefer that he should select his own candidate, and vote independently; and I respect him for doing so.

There are a number of persons — men of culture and leisure — who refuse to vote because their votes will be neutralized by those of foreigners or uneducated persons. They would like to have all such persons disfranchised; then, perhaps, they would condescend to vote themselves. But if any are to be disfranchised, I would not have those disfranchised who perform their duty by voting, but those who neglect it. I respect the foreigner who, not having had the advantage of education, prizes his new privilege as a freeman, and is willing to pay his poll-tax, and take time, in order to vote. I respect him more than I respect the man who, having education, leisure, opportunity, thinks himself too good to do his duty to his country and its institutions.

I once heard this anecdote of Judge Parsons, the great Massachusetts jurist and lawyer. It is said that, being about to try a mercantile case, he ordered a special jury to be summoned; and among the names was that of Colonel Thomas H. Perkins, the leading merchant of Boston in that day, and a personal friend of Judge Parsons. When the officer made his return, he laid down a fifty-dollar bill before the judge. "What is that?" said Parsons. "Colonel Perkins says he is very busy to-day, and

prefers to pay his fine." "Take that bill back to Colonel Perkins," said the judge, "and tell him to come here at once; and if he refuses, bring him by force." When Colonel Perkins appeared, the judge looked sternly at him and said, "What did you mean, sir, by sending money when you were summoned to sit on this jury?" Colonel Perkins replied, "I meant no disrespect to the court, your honor; but I was extremely busy, fitting out a ship for the East Indies, and I thought if I paid my fine I might be excused." "Fitting out a ship for the East Indies, sir!" exclaimed the judge; "and how happens it that you are able to fit out a ship for the East Indies?" "Your honor, I do not understand you." "I repeat, then, my question: How is it that you are able to fit out a ship for the East Indies? If you do not know, I will tell you. It is because the laws of your country are properly administered. If they were not, you would have no ships. Take your seat, sir, with the jury."

There is an important lesson in that story. Here are men inheriting, acquiring, retaining, enjoying, large properties under the law. They are asked in return to pay their taxes, and, by voting, to take their share of the work of putting honest and sensible men into office. But that is beneath their dignity. They do not wish to mingle with such a democratic crowd. Such men spend their time in undervaluing free institutions, declaiming against

universal suffrage, and praising the despotic governments of Europe. Until the French Empire fell through its own baseness, they were its admirers, and wished that Heaven had given us such a ruler as Napoleon III. Some of them are only contented when they are on the boulevards of Paris or in the gaming-rooms of Homburg; and it is no great misfortune to our country to have them there.

When a man belongs to a party with whose general aims he is in sympathy, let him vote for this party, but with two provisos, — that it shall advocate good measures and nominate good men. For the sake of the party itself, to keep it pure, its members should refuse to vote for it when it proposes bad measures or offers bad men as its candidates. That is the warning, and the only warning, which party leaders understand.

But when good men are on one side and important measures on the other, what are we to do? Perhaps I vote with a party in whose principles I believe. But it does not nominate as good men as the other party. Shall I say, "Measures, not men," and vote for my party ticket; or shall I say, "Men, not measures," and vote for the upright candidate? This question requires some consideration, for it is one which we are often called on to answer.

First, I should say this at least, very decidedly: Never be persuaded to vote for a bad man, though he may be ever so able, ever so popular, and may

have the regular party nomination. Do not vote for a man who is intemperate, licentious, dishonest, false; or a man who has been found guilty of a rascality. Such a one is sure, sooner or later, to betray those who trust him. Let it be understood, once for all, that the party contains a large body of conscientious men who cannot be allured or driven to the support of any selfish politician, merely because by adroit bargains and promises he has succeeded in getting a nomination. Bolt such nominations openly, and they will not be repeated. Conscientious men are not only the salt of the earth and the salt of the Church, but also the salt of their party, to keep it from destruction.

Do not vote for a man, either, because he is smart. Smartness in a public man may do harm as well as good. Smartness is the American idol, the god we worship, as the English worship power, and the French reputation. Endow a man with great strength, with power to compass his ends, power of position, power of wealth, power of rank and of office, and the average Englishman falls on his knees before him. Let a man be famous, capable of making a grand display, and the average Frenchman will worship him. Let a man be quick, adroit, full of wit and ingenuity, able to do and say bright things, and the average American looks up to him with devotion and reverence. But not always. I once knew an instance to the contrary in American politics.

In Jefferson County, Ky., the Whig majority some forty years ago was overwhelmingly large, so that two Whig candidates were running against each other. One was Thomas F. Marshall, then in his prime, one of the most brilliant speakers, full of wit, and master of all the arts of oratory. His opponent, Mr. Graves, was a plain Kentucky farmer. The rival candidates were expected to address the people every day and evening before election at each of the voting precincts. Every night the people collected in crowds to hear Tom Marshall speak, and kept him talking to them all the evening. Graves they would hardly listen to at all. Marshall was quite sure of success, but when the day of election came Graves was elected by a large majority. The people had confidence in him; they knew he was an honest, upright man, a man of simple common sense. Marshall they knew to be a man whose moral habits made him unreliable. They liked to hear him speak, and were willing to have him entertain them. But they could not trust him. What happened then may happen again. I suppose the people of Massachusetts are as sagacious in such matters as the people of Kentucky.

A candidate who beforehand makes great promises of what he will do if he is elected is not a safe man to vote for. Great promises are apt to be followed by small performance. Nor is it well to vote for a man whose character you do not approve and with

whose political theories you do not agree, merely for the sake of a change. A change may be for the worse instead of for the better. If you are tired of riding too long a time in a carriage, you do not wish the driver to overturn it for the sake of a change. You leave the carriage.

There are times when measures are the most important question; when parties are divided in regard to some great issues, as they were during the antislavery struggle; then vote for "measures, not men." Vote for the party which advocates the wisest and best measures. At other times there are no such important issues, no great ideas at stake; but on one side there are good, true, faithful men; on the other untrustworthy, selfish politicians. The rule then is to be reversed, and we must say "Men, not measures."

As regards measures, the principal political reforms now required, in order to bring prosperity to the nation, are: (1) More economy in public matters; (2) A fixed and stable currency; (3) Reform in the appointment of officials; (4) Such measures as will tend to prevent pauperism, vice, and crime in the community.

The people have been growing extravagant for many years, as individuals, as towns, as States. Economy in public matters is very necessary, in order to lighten taxation and restore prosperous times. There has been waste in State affairs, and we need economy there.

And to bring about economy in the State we need legislatures and governors who do not believe in jobs, in rewarding friends and punishing enemies, in making the public purse the means of private gain. We want an honest governor and an honest legislature, rather than smart and tricky men.

The public and private waste has come from the appearance of wealth caused by an inflated and irredeemable currency. The one great source of waste has been the derangement of prices caused by the suspension of payment, and the substitution of vast quantities of promises to pay in the place of money. When the Government resumes specie payment, that is, when it is ready to pay its debts, good times will slowly but steadily return. Resumption will restore confidence, and confidence, though a plant of slow growth, will eventually become a great tree of national prosperity. We ought, therefore, to vote against every party, every man, and every measure whose success would plunge us again into the vast gulf from which we have been painfully emerging, — a gulf of misery, danger, dishonor.

One great danger at the present time is from that sentiment which is rapidly extending itself and growing into a powerful influence in politics, the fundamental idea of which is that it is the duty of the Government to make the people rich and happy. Men believe that if the Government would only

make a great deal of paper money and build public works, so as to distribute it in vast quantities, the old prosperity would return. They do not want redemption, — that is, that Government should pay its debt; they do not believe in paying interest; they do not want the national debt paid in gold, and their fundamental idea is that, somehow, Government can make every man rich and happy if it will only do its duty. Government should own the railroads and run them; Government do the banking, carry on the factories, and furnish labor at high prices to all the people.

In many places it is the Democratic party which holds these notions, so wholly opposed to its own traditions. The old Democratic party, from the time of Jefferson to Jackson, believed in hard money; was opposed to the Government having anything to do with internal improvement, and wished the work of the Government to be limited to the simple protection of property and person. General Jackson desired that the State and local banks should issue the paper currency, and that the Government should issue no money but gold. Even so small a work as a stone road, built by the United States from Cumberland in Maryland to Columbus in Ohio, was opposed by the whole Democracy as being beyond the constitutional power of the Government. That was nearer the truth than the present madness, which wishes the Government to do everything.

Good men of all parties should unite against such delusions. It is needed, in the interest of morality, that Government should be confined to the limit of protecting life and property; the rights of persons; the prevention of crime; the care of those unable to work, and doing for the safety and peace of the people what individuals are unable to do. But Government should have nothing to do with money-making enterprises; with building or subsidizing railroads or steamships; with boring tunnels; with mining or manufacturing enterprises. When it undertakes such work, corruption sets in like a flood.

When we go to vote, let us remember that we are fulfilling a sacred duty. In this country, all our safety and hope is in the virtue and intelligence of the people. To produce this intelligence and maintain this virtue, we must have a religion that goes into all parts of life, — into politics, into business, into amusements, into work, study, and play.

It is for this reason among others that I rejoice in every proof of the advance of a liberal and rational Christianity. It is the only one which can save the nation. We need a larger, deeper, broader, higher faith than the world has ever known since the days of Christ and his apostles. We need to preach Christ and him crucified in a higher sense than that of a vicarious atonement. Christ is crucified to-day when injustice is done the lowest of his

servants; when demagogues mislead the people; when selfish men get power in order to use it only for their own advantage; when hypocrites profess to be reformers.

I ask no man to leave his party and join mine, for I have no party, I belong to no party. I shall vote with the Republicans as long as they are on the side of honesty, freedom, and true reform, and give us a real reformer as their candidate. But I do not belong to that, or any other party. To belong to any party is to be a slave, and I like no kind of slavery. But I will vote with any party which votes for truth, for the nation's honor, safety, and peace. I only ask others to do what I do myself, — to vote with the party which is now for the right. When it goes for the wrong I shall leave it, and advise others to do the same.

The election before us is a serious one; one of grave import to the State and nation.[1] It will decide whether Massachusetts shall stand hereafter as she has stood heretofore, — for the highest ideas of the nation; for a pure government, sound laws, honesty, honor; or whether it shall utter an uncertain sound on these points. The result will show whether Massachusetts is faithful to her grand traditions; whether she resists every attempt to lure her from the path of justice; whether she believes in the union of all classes for the public good, and rebukes all attempts at setting the poor against the

[1] This was said in November, 1878.

rich, or those who labor with their hands against those who labor with their brains for the common good. I have no doubt, no hesitation, no uncertainty, as to the result. The State of Hancock and Adams, of Quincy, Charles Sumner, John A. Andrew, is not to be deceived to its ruin. I do not think that God means to disgrace us by leaving us to follow cunningly devised fables, or to take for leaders such men as the Apostle described as seeking to lead the Church in his time, "proud, ignorant, doting about questions and strifes of words, whence cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, evil seducers, who wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

In that great sea-fight, in which Nelson fell in the arms of victory, he hoisted, as his last signal before battle, the flag with the motto, "England expects every man to do his duty." Let our motto be not, "Massachusetts expects every man to do his duty," but "God expects every man to do his duty." Let us show our gratitude to him who has given us freedom, peace, plenty in our homes, noble institutions, and a grand history, by transmitting them unimpaired to our children and our children's children. Our fathers, brothers, and sons went to fight and die to save the land from slavery and disunion; let us live and work to save it from dishonesty and dishonor.

XXIX.

THE BIBLE A PANORAMA OF LIFE.

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"Again, taking him up into an exceeding high mountain, he showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, in a moment of time."

THE advantage of a view from a high place is, that you see the relative positions of all the objects around you. You have a map and a landscape in one. Looking over Boston from the cupola of the State House, you observe at a glance its houses, squares, and public buildings; the sea, harbor, and islands; the course of Charles River; the direction taken by the railroads; the density of the different centres of population; and the position and comparative size of East Boston, South Boston, Roxbury, and Charlestown. You may live in the city for years, and not have as comprehensive and accurate an idea of it as you will gain in half an hour by looking down on it from such an elevation. Hence the importance for travellers, that in visiting foreign places they should begin their observations by obtaining a view from some central and lofty position.

The same is true in the world of thought. A just insight into the relations of daily actions can be best gained by rising into the realm of ideas, universal truths, large principles. Your two children quarrel about the possession of a plaything. To settle that dispute, it is necessary that you should explain to them the rights of property, — that is, ascend into the region of everlasting justice. Some one asks you what you think of Browning's poetry or George Eliot's novels. Before you can give a satisfactory answer, you must consider what makes a good novel or poem; what is the essential quality needed in each; how many different kinds there may be, and which is the best. You must take a comprehensive view of literature and art, — in short, rise to a position which overlooks the whole field. Then you may have some basis for your criticism; otherwise it is only guesswork, or the expression of personal partiality.

Such a wide view, which circles the whole horizon, we call a panorama. I hope that most of you have seen the panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg. You walk through a dark passage, go up a few stairs, and are at once in the midst of a summer landscape, with bright sky, far-reaching plains, over which you look for miles to the distant woods and hills. You have the battle around you, but without its distracting tumult. You examine at your leisure the main points of that great struggle which was one of the decisive battles of history, — a

turning-point in the progress of mankind; and you learn more about it as a whole in an hour than the actors who took part in it could understand at the time. You go away in a serious but grateful mood, with the thought in your mind which Bryant had on another battle-field: —

> "Oh, never shall the land forget
> Where gushed the best blood of her brave, —
> Gushed, warm with hope and promise yet,
> Upon the soil they died to save."

Some books give a panorama of life. What an infinite variety of characters, situations, historic events, pass before us in the novels of Scott, the plays of Shakspeare, and the histories of Herodotus! But more than all we find this in the Bible. It differs from other books in giving us at the same time the outward action and the principle which underlies it, human conduct and the divine law which rewards or condemns, the progress of nations and the Providence which leads them on.

We rightly call the Bible a revelation of God, — of God's will, God's law, God's love and grace. It brings us nearer to God than other religious books; that is why it still represents the religion of the most advanced races of mankind, and is to them their holy Scripture. But the Bible is also a revelation of man, of human nature in its vast variety and essential unity. It shows, with inflexible sincerity, the failings of the saint and the redeemi

qualities in the sinner. If we could forget for a while that it is a religious book, and read it as a collection of interesting pictures from past history and biography, it would acquire a new and peculiar fascination. We should find it giving the heights and depths of human nature, and the strangest experiences of man in the most vivid coloring. We should see how truly

> "Out of the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old."

Without being less supernatural, it would be infinitely more natural. We can trace in the Bible the progress of human society. We have pastoral pictures of the wandering nomads, moving with their camels, sheep, and slaves, from one grassy region to another, pitching their black tents by the side of fountains and streams. The patriarchal times rise before us, each family surrounding its head and chief, who is at once prophet, priest, and king. Then we see the Israelites breaking into Palestine, as the Goths and Saxons and Normans broke into Southern Europe, destroying the old civilization, but planting the seeds of something better. In the Book of Judges we have a picture of society disorganized, a state of anarchy, where every man does what is right in his own eyes. Anarchy usually produces despotism, and so the anarchy of the Book of Judges precedes the autocracy of Saul, David, and Solomon. We read how, under Ezra and Nehemiah, Hebrew society is reorganized as a

hierarchy, under laws administered by a priesthood. Society thus organized by priests becomes intolerant, full of bitter zeal, and at last is swept from the earth by the secular power of Rome. Meantime, its truths, its sincere religious faith, its monotheism, its moral law, passed like leaven into the social life of the Roman Empire, and worked secretly within the mass till the whole was leavened. Thus, in the Bible, we have a panorama of the history of social human institutions, with the explanation added of the causes of these results. It is like one of those clocks with a glass face, where we can see not only the movement of the hands, but the springs and the wheels that produce the motion and regulate it.

Individual life, in all its forms, also appears in the Bible. This book has been found fault with because its heroes and saints were not perfect; because Abraham and Peter lied, and Samuel killed his enemy in cold blood, and Elijah massacred the prophets of Baal, and the apostles quarrelled and were unable to work together. But that shows that it is true to life, — for good men have their faults, often grave ones. The Bible gives no picture of perfect men, save in a single spotless example. It shows us the world as it is, — shadows darkening the brightest scenes, sunshine illuminating the blackest. The type of lovely womanly fidelity appears in Ruth, who was not an Israelite, but a Moabite. A Roman centurion comes forward as an instance of

faith; a woman of Phœnicia as an example of confiding hope; Balaam, the *vates* of some far-off Syrian tribe, is given a high place in the goodly fellowship of the prophets; Melchizedek, a Bedôuin sheikh and priest, is reverenced by Abraham, the friend of God. Thus the Bible, like Jesus, goes among publicans and sinners, and honors goodness wherever it finds it.

The Bible also gives us the history of religion from its lowest forms to its highest. We see the gradual progress of this great sentiment through fetichism, idolatry, polytheism, and monotheism. The Jews themselves present an example of this. Under Moses, they worshipped as a fetich a golden calf. The brazen serpent became a fetich, so that the zealous Hezekiah broke in pieces this venerable relic, which had been sacredly preserved from the time of Moses, because the children of Israel burnt incense before it, and "he called it Nehushtan, a piece of brass." The Israelites went through the stage of polytheism as well as that of idolatry; for many centuries they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, as their neighbors did. Even monotheism was a slow development. With Abraham it meant not the worship of Jehovah as the only God, but Jehovah as the most high God; the others might be true Gods, but they were inferior to Jehovah. With David the gods of the nations became mere idols, having some magical power, perhaps, but not divine, only demonic. But Paul saw more deeply.

He said that an idol was nothing, — neither to be loved nor hated. The worship of Jehovah was at first that of a jealous God, who would punish any personal slight or wrong; who had his favorites and enemies; who had a local habitation in the ark, tabernacle, and Jewish temple; a God who could swear in his wrath, and repent that he had made man. But with these crude conceptions was a leaven of purer thought, and it passed up, by a process of development, till the time came when Jesus told the woman of Samaria, "God is spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Jesus declared that God is the universal Father, whose sun shines on evil and good, and whose rain falls on the just and the unjust; the Father who welcomes back his prodigal son; who has many mansions in his vast house of creation, and who will provide a suitable home for every child. When theologians teach that the whole of the Bible is the word of God, and that the sayings of Job are as divine as those of Jesus, they prevent men from seeing the immense advance which the Gospel of Christ has made on all the beliefs that preceded it.

So, too, we may observe in the Bible the progress not only of religious faith, but of pious emotion. For thousands of years piety expressed itself by sacrifices, by giving the best thing men had to God, in order to please him. Even the wise Solomon thought to gratify God by offering him not a

hecatomb, but ten hecatombs of innocent victims. Abraham fancied, till a higher inspiration taught him better, that it was his duty to sacrifice his first-born child. If he were unable to do that, he doubted whether his faith could be as powerful as that of the neighboring kings, who offered *their* children to Baal and Moloch. We see emotional piety in David, — ritualistic and ceremonial piety displayed in the grand ceremonies of the Temple, — the piety of poetic enthusiasm culminating in Isaiah; the piety of mysticism glorified in John; of plain, practical morality in James; of intellectual insight in Paul; and in Jesus the supreme harmony of heart, intellect, and will, which made him able to say, "I and my father are one," and able to believe that his disciples might reach this same height and be one with himself and his Father.

As the race goes forward, step by step, in its slow ascent from barbarism to humanity, we all, as individuals, pass through like stages of experience. At times can we not sympathize with fetich worship? Do we not keep in some hidden shrine the plaything of our dead child, — the little ring, or pencil, or withered flower, sanctified to us by the sacred memories of the past? At times are we not all idolaters, finding something so great and wonderful in this or that man of genius, that we give ourselves up without reserve to be led by him? The halo we saw around his brow slowly fades into the light of common day; but he has helped us

even through our undiscriminating and uncritical idolatry. So have I myself been aided by my unreserved and unquestioning admiration for such writers as Milton, Coleridge, Goethe, Shelley, Carlyle, Channing, Emerson. Now I can see defects in them which I was unable then to notice; but even such idolatry, if temporary, may help us onward. Sometimes we are mystics, with Swedenborg, Plotinus, and Jacob Boehmen; sometimes we share the devotional inspiration of George Herbert, Thomas à Kempis, or Fénelon; sometimes we are seized with the spirit of monastic sacrifice and seclusion, or become devout according to some sacramental and liturgic method. And to each of these moods of piety the Bible brings some text or example for our encouragement, and some warning to keep us from going too far. It kindly sympathizes with our childish enthusiasms, and gently leads up through them to a broader and loftier plane of faith.

Have there not been hours when we were so oppressed by the sense of our poverty of heart; our coldness, selfishness, self-indulgence; our sluggish inactivity; our easy lapse into folly and sin, that no words seemed adequate to express this but the extravagant penitence of the Psalmist: "I was shapen in iniquity;" "Fearfulness and trembling have come over me, horror has overwhelmed me;" "Oh that I had wings like a dove, then could I fly away and be at rest"?

And have there not been hours when the mysteries of life lay heavy on our souls; when the miseries, wrongs, and woes of humanity seemed too hard to endure? Then we could understand how Jesus bore the sins of mankind on his own heart, and how even to him, for a moment, his Father's love disappeared, so that he could find no words to express his sense of loneliness but those of the Psalm, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Then, perhaps, we read the Book of Job, and we feel that around his soul, as around ours, a midnight darkness of contradiction had gathered, and the air was "thick with universal pain." He also struggled with the same problems as we; he could not see the justice of God when the good suffered and the wicked were triumphant.

And sometimes we go down to a lower circle of this Dantesque hell, and find ourselves by the side of the greatest pessimist the world has known, the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes. "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor under the sun?" What is the use of anything? All things go round in an unmeaning circle, coming from nowhere and going nowhere. "The sun rises and goes down, and hastes to the place where he arose. The thing which has been is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun." "So," says he, "I hated life; I hated all the labor I had taken under the sun. I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor it had

taken. For all man's days are sorrows, and the wise man and fool are alike."

From this black depth of despair we come up into the sunshine and glory of the Gospels. In them reigns the peace of God, the rest of the soul, —a trust which goes so deep that no misery or mystery can disturb it. We have now risen with Christ, not upon the mountain where the tempter took him, hoping to dazzle his eyes with worldly glory; but to the Mount of Transfiguration, where a heavenly glory irradiates the earthly features, where we talk in spirit with Lawgiver and Prophet, where God is that Light in whom there is no darkness at all, that Love which evermore teaches us to love in return, and the Grace

> "That finds her way,
> The speediest of his winged messengers,
> To visit all his creatures, and to all
> Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought."

We stand on this Mount of Transfiguration with Christ and his apostles when we have within us the spirit that was in them. Then we can converse, not only with Moses and Elias, but with David and Solomon, Paul and John. With Moses we see the majesty of divine law, — the law of the two tables which binds heaven to earth and earth to heaven. In our hours of sorrow and disappointment, when our best hopes seem defeated, we go away with Elijah to some lonely wilderness of thought, where we complain that the world is all wrong, that good

people have no chance, that iniquity triumphs, and that only a few are left, like ourselves, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. But then we are taught, as Elijah was taught, that there are a great many more righteous and innocent souls than those we know, and that while evil is like the earthquake and fire and tempest, goodness whispers in human hearts with a still and small voice. In our hours of sorrow, or while sin lies heavy on us, David's words come to our lips, and we say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, — him, my deliverer and my God!" And sometimes we are carried up to heights unattainable by our own strength, on the strong pinion of apostolic inspiration, and can say with Paul, out of his deep experience interpreting our own, that we also can serve God "in patience, in necessities, in labors; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as dying, and behold we live; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Thus, whenever we rise higher, by a good purpose, by an earnest desire for what is true and right, we find the Bible not our master, but our friend. It becomes a companion on our way; it gives us the words in which we can best express our experiences

and our prayers; it shows us our own nature and needs. There are many noble Scriptures in the world, — the Vedas, the Avesta, the writings of the Buddhists, the Eddas of the North, — and all have something good for the races which revere them. But, having given many years to the study of those ethnic Bibles, I come back to our own with more interest and a higher appreciation. The Old and New Testaments go down deeper into the soul's needs; go up higher in their teaching of divine truth; go out more widely in a comprehensive picture of human life and earthly experience. As we read them, they take possession of us, and yet belong to us. All are ours, whether Paul, Apollos, or Peter, or Jesus; for the sacred words of Jesus seem uttered for our own every-day needs! Jesus is our own friend and Saviour; we belong to him and he belongs to us. Across the ages he speaks his friendly words; down the long series of years he calls us to himself; he is not only master and Lord, but brother and companion.

From off the mountain's lonely height
  We gaze with glad surprise,
Where, in the shadow and the light,
  The broadening landscape lies.
Fields, forests, rivers, gleam and shine;
  The wide-spread world surrounds us;
But still the pale horizon line
  Encircles, limits, bounds us.
Ascend the vaster height of soul,
  The mount of ancient story,

And all earth's lands and realms unroll
  Their map of gloom and glory.
Prophets and saints with mortals talk,
  And seers of every nation
Upon this mount with Jesus walk, —
  Mount of Transfiguration.
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